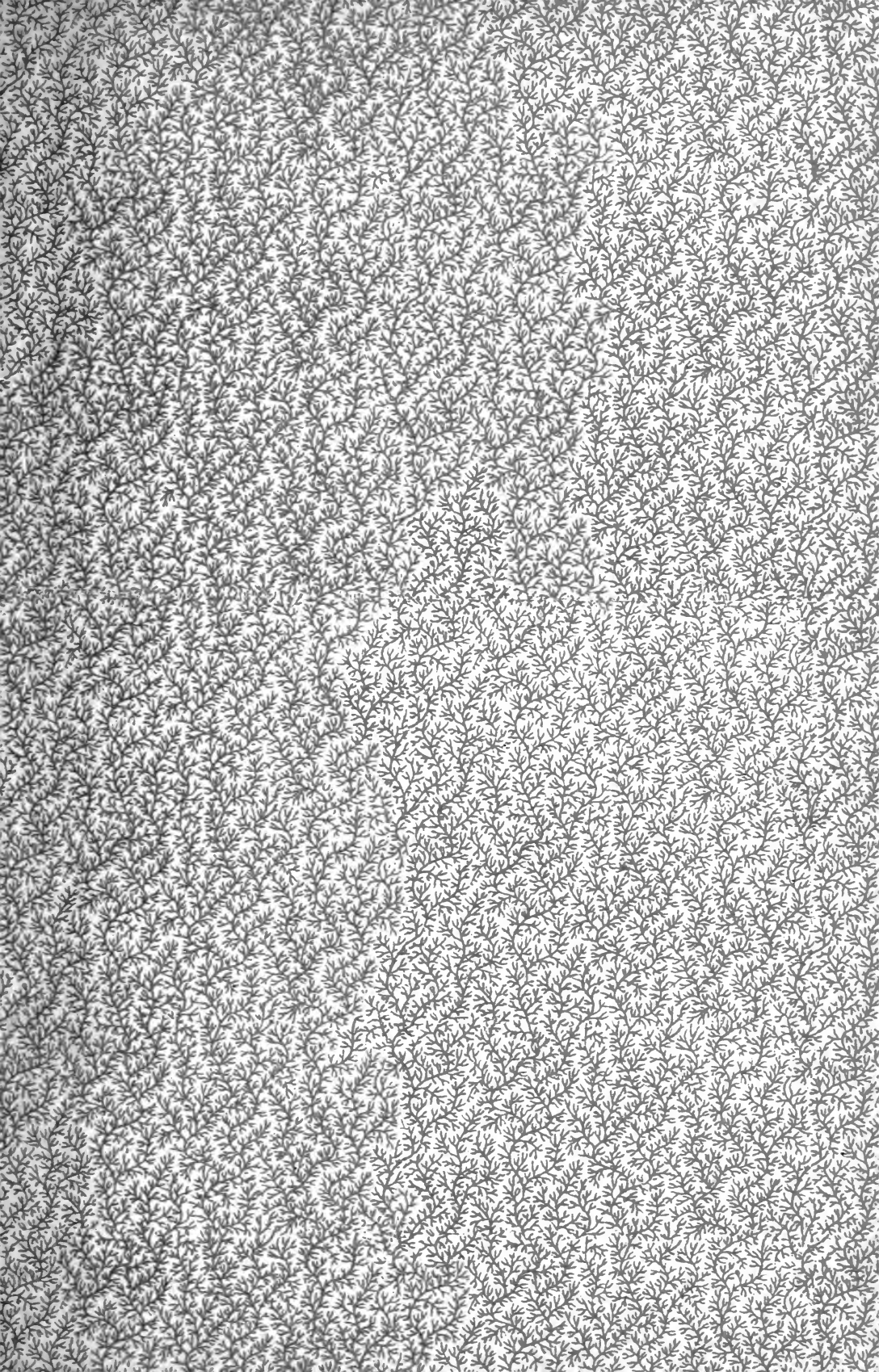


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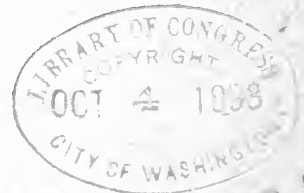
CHURCH OFFICERS

1894-2
BY
G. H. DRYER, D.D.

"Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things"

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TO
MY FATHER,
ORRIN C. DRYER,
FOR MORE THAN FORTY YEARS AN EARNEST, FAITHFUL, AND
DEVOTED
OFFICIAL MEMBER
OF THE
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

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PART I.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND REWARDS OF
OFFICIAL MEMBERSHIP IN THE
CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

THE OFFICIAL MEMBERS—NUMBER AND WORK.

THE OFFICIAL MEMBERS AND THE COMMUNITY.

THE OFFICIAL MEMBERS AND THE CHURCH.

THE OFFICIAL MEMBERS IN THEIR RELATION TO EACH OTHER.

THE OFFICIAL MEMBERS AND THE PASTOR.

THE OFFICIAL MEMBERS AND THE PRESIDING ELDER.

THE OFFICIAL MEMBERS AND THEIR PERSONAL RELIGIOUS
LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

THE OFFICIAL MEMBERS—NUMBER AND WORK.

"Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that is in thy camp."—Deut. xxix, 10, 11.

THE general and the soldiers do not make an army. The military efficiency of the rank and file, the value of the army under the leadership of a Grant, a Wellington, or even a Napoleon, depends upon the valor, ability, and disciplined cooperation of the officers, both of the staff and line.

The essential factors of a Protestant church are three: the pastor, the congregation, including the body of the membership, and the lay officiant; in Methodism, the pastor, the membership, with the congregation, and the lay members of the Quarterly Conference. These must heartily cooperate to make an efficient working Methodist church.

Elements of
a Methodist
church.

The pastor is trained to this end. The membership have weekly instruction in their duties. What provision is made for the training of young men and women for their responsibilities as representatives of the membership, and duties as leaders directing the life and activities of the church? Is the task so easy, the problem of Christian leadership of so little difficulty, that no training or prepara-

Provision for
training.

tion is required to do the best work possible to the lay officary of Methodism? To answer these questions we must consider the number and work of these leaders among the five million of Methodist laymen, what they have accomplished and what lies before them.

The lay membership of the Quarterly Conferences and the official boards of the Methodist Episcopal Church alone must number not far from two hundred thousand persons. The number of official members in the other branches of Methodism is at least equal to their proportionate membership. In the Methodist Episcopal Church it includes the class leaders in the twelve thousand pastoral charges, averaging from five to seven for each charge; the stewards, ranging from three to thirteen, and averaging from seven to nine; the trustees of over twenty-three thousand churches, who are members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and that must always be two thirds, averaging from three to nine; the superintendents of the more than twenty-seven thousand Sunday schools, who are members of the same Church, that is over ninety per cent. It also includes the fourteen thousand local preachers, the presidents of the nine thousand Epworth League chapters, and the uncounted exhorters. With these are associated the four hundred and fifty presiding elders and more than fifteen thousand ministers—in round numbers, twelve thousand in pastoral, educational, reform, and journalistic work, one thousand in supernumerary and two thousand in superannuate relations—making, after all deductions for those holding two or more official positions, nearly or quite two hundred thousand lay and fifteen thousand clerical members of the

Quarterly Conferences ; in all Methodism in America, well-nigh four hundred thousand.

What may not such a picked body of commissioned officers do in directing the work of the two and one half millions of members forming the Methodist Episcopal Church and the five millions forming the Methodist army in America ?

The marvel of modern church history is the growth of organized American Methodism from a date coeval with the formation of our national gov-
 ernment to the present time. As the for-
 ests have been cleared and the prairies broken, as farms, towns, and cities have taken their place, making ours the most prosperous and wealthy nation of the globe, so in parallel lines of endeavor, and with results equally magnificent, has gone on the planting of the Christian Church and the growth of Methodism. We shall never cease to hold in lasting remembrance and gratitude the most self-denying Protestant ministry this century has seen—the Methodist itinerants. Their prowess, conflicts, and victories will ever be an inspiration and a priceless heritage to the Church they reared and served.

Past achievements.

But let us ever remember the pioneer class leaders who gave their little flocks in the wilderness all the pastoral care they received ; the first Sunday school superintendents and teachers who founded the Christian training of the children and youth in log cabins and schoolhouses. We must not fail to reckon upon our list of Christian heroes those stewards and trustees who, out of the narrow means of those founding homes in a new country and clearing the wilderness for habitation, began the support of a regular ministry

and laid the foundations of thousands of church edifices. The itinerant preached, the people gave; but without the unceasing labor, the careful planning, and the assuming of heavy financial obligations by her lay officary, Methodism could never have become one of the great Christian denominations in this country.

We need not go back to the days of the fathers to see the results of the consecrated and self-denying labors of the official members of Methodism. Take our own Church only for the last twenty years, 1872-1892. Our membership has increased from 1,500,000 to 2,300,000. Churches, from 14,000 to 23,000; in value, from \$62,000,000 to \$99,000,000. Parsonages, from 4,500 to 8,700; in value, from \$8,500,000 to \$15,000,000. Sunday schools, from 17,000 to 27,000; teachers, from 193,000 to 300,000; scholars, from 1,278,000 to 2,300,000. Benevolences, from less than \$1,000,000 to \$2,500,000. Pastoral support, which is now nearly \$10,000,000, is twice what it was twenty years ago. Our greatest gain has been in educational work: in institutions, from 102 to 195; students, from 23,000 to 40,000, and capital invested, from \$3,000,000 to \$27,000,000. The increase in the quality of the work done has been greater than in the amount. This represents something of the divine blessing which has attended the faith and self-sacrifice of the ministry, the devotion and liberality of the membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church. To the offering of the official membership of the Church of zeal, effort, commanding influence, the responsibilities of leadership for these twenty years, has no increase been given of God? Who can measure its value?

No one would desire to detract from the credit due to the ministry and the body of the membership for whatever use of opportunities God has blessed, but attention is called to a too often omitted factor, without which this work would have been still undone.

What has been wrought only outlines the extent of the duties and obligations of the hour.

The lay oversight and care of 2,500,000 Present work. members; the instruction of 2,500,000 Sunday school scholars; the organization and help of young people's societies rising to 1,000,000 members; the care of \$120,000,000 worth of real estate, with its rebuildings, improvements, and repairs; the sole charge of raising \$10,000,000 for the support of the ministry; the effective cooperation in the collection of benevolent contributions rapidly rising from \$2,500,000 to \$5,000,000—these are some of the items which can be expressed by figures. The elements of power in a successful church, springing from the piety, the ability, the character, and influence of the lay officary of the church in each community, outweigh all that figures express, and are known only to the great Head of the Church, who has always used them as among the most efficient agencies for building up his kingdom.

All that this survey shows of present needs and responsibilities is dwarfed as we look at the Demands of the future. demands of the near future. Hitherto the Church has had chiefly and almost solely to do with individuals. Slowly and with some reluctance we have admitted the claims of the family and made integral and important parts of our church work the teaching of the Sunday school and the training of the

Epworth League. We have now come to a period when we can no longer ignore the claims of the community on the Church. This means the close grappling and effective dealing with the larger factors in the problem of the evangelization of the nations. We cannot do less, but more, for the individual and the family; we must affect more powerfully the life of the community than Christianity has ever yet done. When all has been done that the ministry and the Church can do the lay officary of the Church will find this task of influencing the life of the community peculiarly its own. The leadership of the trained, devoted, and successful pastor must find its first response and heartiest cooperation from them.

Does it require any training to do this work as
Necessity for Christian men should do work for their
training. Lord? Not that the members of our official boards and Quarterly Conferences are untrained men. Often they are fully the equals of the pastors in scholastic training, and have an experience of human life in its practical and social aspects which can never be given by books. They have had a common experience of personal salvation and of devout communion with God. They know and love the divine word and prize the ordinances, discipline, and usages of the Church. They know the opinions, sentiments, and feelings of the body of the membership. Yet the question recurs, Is no special thought or consideration necessary for the best use of the opportunities and privileges of membership in the Quarterly Conference? The young men who are or should come into this relation, especially from the Epworth League, ought to have some more definite

and systematic training than mere association with the older members and the actual experience of the work.

The Christian Church, and especially Methodism, has laid large stress upon the value of training for specific duties and work. Training in
Methodism.

Everywhere leadership means preparation and discipline. Our Lord thought three years none too long to train twelve men for the work of the apostolate. To this he gave more attention than to the teaching of the multitudes and the working of miracles. All Christian Churches concede the necessity for a trained ministry. Methodism recognized this necessity from the beginning. Though often choosing and sending out men illiterate and with scant educational opportunities, she never left them so, but, putting them to work, put them to training also. Wesley's rules, still retained in our Discipline, say, "Read the most useful books, and that regularly and constantly. Steadily spend all the morning in this employment, or at least five hours in the four and twenty. 'But I have no taste for reading.' Contract a taste for it by use, or return to your former employment." By this thorough and consistent training, joined with the guidance of senior preachers and presiding elders, with Conference examinations upon a prescribed course of study, and in later times colleges and theological schools, the Methodist Church has sought to train up its pastorate. The Church has not been unmindful of the body of its membership, as its probationary system, pastoral and lay supervision, class organization, educational institutions, Chautauqua circles, and church lyceums testify. No other Church has done more in this direction. In one respect

we have made progress. The claims of Bishop Vincent upon the gratitude of the Church which has chosen him as one of her chief pastors include not only the Chautauqua movement and the reorganization of our Sunday schools, but the founding and developing among us of the normal class, preparing Sunday school teachers for their work. If we had an equally efficient agency to train class leaders less would be heard of the decay of that most admirable organization and means of grace, the class meeting. We therefore conclude there is need of something which shall instruct and train especially the younger members of our official boards and Quarterly Conferences. For this purpose this manual is written.

A practicable and proper training for and consideration of this work, it is believed, would double the efficiency of the official membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church. We know no other such latent force waiting but the proper call and direction to double the effectiveness of the Church in building up the kingdom of God. The grooving of the barrel gives accuracy of aim and force to the ball.

CHAPTER II.

THE OFFICIAL MEMBERS AND THE COMMUNITY.

"The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ."—Rev. xi, 15.

"Light of Christ, shine on all."

IN a village in western New York many years ago Deacon E—— kept a country store. A certain widow living in the vicinity, a member of the same church, had a bright son eager to learn. The family was poor, but highly respected. The son one day came into the deacon's store and told him of a chance he had to attend school. He greatly needed an arithmetic. If the deacon would trust him, as soon as the winter's school was closed he would earn the money and would pay him the price of the book. The deacon was a good man and upright, but he was not touched by the boy's keen desire for knowledge; he thought there was some risk, and refused the request. The widow's son went immediately across the street to another store, kept by a man with whom he had but a slight acquaintance. The man was a strong opponent of evangelical religion. He heard the boy's request, liked his frank manner and eagerness to help himself, and without a moment's hesitation gave him the book on the terms he proposed. That widow's son became a Methodist class leader and local preacher with no ordinary gifts and capacity for wide usefulness. He

The deacon
and the wid-
ow's son.

lamented more than anything else that the deacon's rebuff had turned him away from evangelical Christianity and caused a waste of twenty years in irreligious life, excused by the teachings of the benefactor of his boyhood. These years and the work that he might have done in them for Christ and his Church were lost forever because of the deacon's lack of sympathy and desire to help one who, according to the New Testament, had peculiar claims upon his consideration. Nothing can set forth more clearly than this little incident the representative character of the office-bearers of the church. We are all familiar with the fact that the pastor represents the church; that his acts, if uncharitable or unwise, injure the church and the cause of Christ. Even so, and in many cases more effectively than any pastor, the official members of the church commend the Gospel or hinder its course.

The first consideration, then, in the thought of every official member should be that he represents the church and the Christian religion in that community. In a sense this is true of all professing Christians; but it is true of men who are the official representatives of the church as of no other men in the community. While this imposes obligations and makes the effects of failures and sins more harmful, it gives opportunity for long and wide-extended influence, that increases with the years in power and beneficence.

There was in a Baptist church in the Genesee Valley a deacon who, from his ability, piety, and character, exerted a greater influence on the community than all the pastors the church had while he lived

there. Men in middle life recall a class leader, a college professor, whose Christian influence did more to mold the character of the young men in a certain institution than that of all the rest of the faculty combined. The very fact that he was a layman, joined with such a poise, steadiness, and symmetry of character, gave his life and word a weight and influence unsurpassed.

What aspects of church life should all official members represent? Of course, there must be great diversity among them—the old and the young; the rich and the poor; men and women of differing occupations, gifts, and temperaments, yet all having and setting forth the Spirit of the Lord Christ.

The official members should first represent to the community the moral ideals and religious life of the church. There may be a certain kind of religion without morality, moral principle, or strict business integrity. If so it is not the religion of Christ, and is not the religion which saves the world. In spite of the speculation, monopolies, and trusts of our time there is no doubt but the ethical standard of the business world is higher than a generation ago. Little acts of meanness, tricks of trade, and efforts to avoid the fulfillment of contracts have much less favor shown them and are much less common. There is a certain kind of cheating which keeps inside the law and has no regard for ethical considerations; but men of that stamp are known, and have no accepted business standing in the community. No man can retain his place as an official member, without great damage to the church, who belongs to this class, or who has

Moral ideals
and religious
life.

departed from the highest standard of business integrity. This is a commercial age, and if our religion does not make us right in the ordinary transactions of business life it will only harm and not help our fellows struggling with the same temptations. This might almost be taken for granted; but this is not all. The official members represent the religious life, the piety of the church. They should be men who know by personal experience what means repentance and the divine forgiveness of sins. They should be men of faith, because men of prayer; through personal conflict and endeavor they should know the gospel meaning of growth in grace and overcoming the world. In a word, they should represent the best type of scriptural piety in the Church.

The men who officially represent the church in the community should set forth the crowning
widest charity. grace of the Christian faith—love: love for God and abiding love for men; love that does not flinch, but sacrifices; that does not despair, but hopes beyond hope, that never fails. The spirit of the thirteenth of First Corinthians thus presented will win in any community. It will keep good men from becoming censorious and narrow, and will enable them to put the best construction upon motives. They will thus bring into ordinary, everyday living the sweetness and sunshine of the abiding Christ. There will then be a grace of Christian living which is the glory of our earthly life. They will thus be men of widest charity, that love which no personal interest or church bounds can confine, while they uphold and illustrate the highest moral standard, yet always extend a hand of help to the victims of igno-

rance, weakness, folly, and sin ; not so much a judge as a helper of the moral life of the community ; for none malice, for all charity.

Such a moral standard, such a religious life joined to such a charitable spirit, will result, ^{Noble character.} when lived out in daily conduct, in noble character, that character which influences others because built upon a mastery of self. A man who cannot forget himself in devotion to his Church, its work, and the salvation of his fellows will hardly by his character exalt Christianity in the community where he is known. But the man who has this consecration and self-poise cannot fail to advance the cause of Christ in the community each day he lives. Where ability and gifts of leadership are possessed nothing wins like character. That is the saving salt in any Church and in any community. Salvation in its last analysis is character. Nothing else can win for a Church like a character which sets forth human redemption. Consider that these men represent the highest type of Christian morality, religious life, charity, and character ; can anything more potent be found for Christian leadership and leading the community to God ? In natural gifts, resources, experience, and ability they stand in the front rank in the communities in which they live. Let them but truly represent the best result of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus in life and character, and varied circumstances and contrasting temperaments, and there is built up in the community a solid and abiding Christian influence that molds this and after generations.

But while these characteristics must necessarily be

chief in influencing the life of communities, there are others which are desirable.

To have the largest measure of influence the members of the church officary should never forget that they are citizens, and should be quick to respond to all that touches the common weal of the community. Bearing heavy burdens in the church, it may be with limited means, there may not be ability to share largely public burdens. But there is always opportunity to show sympathy, interest, to give self, and so aid in every good work that men can never say that service of the church has blinded to the highest interests and the most pressing needs of the community. All that concerns its physical, intellectual, moral, and social life concerns the leaders of the Christian Church. Sanitary, educational, preventive, reformatory, and moral means and agencies will engage his attention, and when worthy and wisely managed secure his support. The sense of common weal which looks to the best use of business advantages for the community, and the public spirit that devotes itself to the purifying and invigorating of local political life as sacredly as our fathers to the founding and unifying of the republic, well becomes the leader of church life among our laymen.

The community, even the most ungodly, expect the leaders of our Christian laity to be on the right side of all moral reforms. The world seldom goes faster in these directions than the great body of Christian laymen. Our lay leaders should be the advanced guard in such movements. Where they do not lead they can hinder mightily. A Methodist officially representing his church and renting his

property for the sale of liquor injures the church in that community beyond all his power to repair, though he be worth a million and give for church uses the tenth of all that is his.

Moral influence outweighs money in building up Christ's kingdom. This was shown in the political world thirty years ago in the antislavery struggle. The line will be drawn with equal clearness and firmness before the liquor traffic is overthrown. So with schemes of social amelioration and reform. Not our ministers only, but the leading laymen of the churches, should be able to think and speak intelligently upon these topics. Their practical knowledge of men and affairs would be of the utmost value in the consideration of questions which must affect the social life of our great cities, of our communities, and the nation. To have and maintain the influence we seek in the community our laymen must study and seek to master these problems.

The relation of our Church to other Christian Churches in the community will always concern our official members. Nothing is Other Christian Churches. ever gained by denouncing or abusing the Roman Catholic Church; the showing the way of God more perfectly will win some each year. In our relations to other evangelical Churches some things seem clear. We should toward them observe the golden rule. In our treatment and dealings with their pastors, the members of their churches and congregations, we should do what we should wish them to do to us if our positions were reversed.

We should regard the prosperity of the other evangelical Churches as increasing the Christian influ-

ence in the community, and so directly aiding our work. The abler the pastors, the stronger the other churches, the better for a strong or a live Methodist church. In a very important sense we are members one of another. The legitimate prosperity of one is a help to all. Of course this bears hard on weak or dying churches. But God is honored and the community helped only by live, working churches. Such, though small, will not be feeble, and will be sure to grow. We must recognize that in building up the kingdom of God in the community these churches must work together, and not against each other. Sometimes a bigoted pastor or a proselyting church may make such a course difficult; yet the pastor and the church that follows it will gain the respect and the esteem of the community and of all good men in the churches. The living of the prayer, "Thy kingdom come," will hasten the day when all Christian denominations shall dwell and work together in full fraternal union, and the greatest reproach of our Protestant Christianity will be taken away. This includes a proper sense of self-respect for the work and influence of our own Church. No Methodist church can afford to be a satellite of some larger church of another communion or have its independent church life dwarfed or directed by other churches. If it has any mission in the community let it show it by its individual yet fraternal life and activity.

Finally, the official members of our churches should
 The outcast and the poor. keep in touch with the poorest, most helpless, and outcast of the community. Those most poverty-stricken and wretched always feel free to go to the Methodist pastor when sick-

ness and death invade the household. This is our praise.

So our leading laymen ought to know something of the life, and have enough of Christian sympathy, so that men of this class when in trouble would seek and not shun them. There was a saying of the old French nobility, *Noblesse oblige*. John Wesley translated it into plain Anglo-Saxon when he said, "Go to those who need you most." The Church which cares for the poor and the wretched, those who have no helper, is doing the Master's work and will not fail of his blessing. May this primal glory of Methodism never depart from us!

What will such a representation of the Christian religion and Church by its office-bearers do in the community? It will do what all sermons cannot do, what no devotion of the pastor to his work can alone accomplish. It will help to make Christianity real to men. It will enable the mass of the community to see that it is adapted to the real needs of all men in all conditions of society and life. If the Church responds, as it certainly will, to such high-spirited, generous, and Christlike leadership, then it is doing its part toward the evangelization of the world, making the community, and so the nation, Christian not only in name but in reality.

Effect of such
official mem-
bership.

Beacons burn to shine.

CHAPTER III.

THE OFFICIAL MEMBERS AND THE CHURCH.

“Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.”
—Matt. xx, 27.

WHY are official members necessary? What is the necessity or use of an official board or a Quarterly Conference? The answers to these questions will explain the relation of the official members to the church they serve.

Churches consist of scores, or hundreds, of members of all ages, classes, and conditions—the aged and infirm, the sick and disabled, the well and strong—men, women, and children. There is necessarily much business connected with the affairs of the church which would not interest the whole body of the membership, and which, if they had to give personal attention to all the details, would prove an intolerable burden. Such would be the erection, repair, and proper care of the church buildings and parsonages; providing the best methods for obtaining the money necessary for the current expenses of the church; the payment of pastor, organist, sexton, etc.; advice which the pastor may need in regard to his preaching, pastoral work, or administration; the proper oversight of the work of the Sunday school and the young people’s societies; the zealous care of the sick and the poor; questions of character and admission to the church; cases of pastoral admonition and discipline;

many emergencies arising in the spiritual and social life of the church. For example, a series of revival services ought to have the heartiest cooperation of the official members. Sometimes a pastor must take a stand against prevalent forms of vice, intemperance, gambling, lewdness, or financial corruption. He will need wise counsel from men of experience and ability. His hands are greatly strengthened if they support him in his work for the better moral life of the community. If, as is sometimes the case, he must face the foe alone, a calm consideration with the brethren will show him what he has to meet and how to meet it, and will command their respect even when they differ from him in judgment. Many of these things, it is evident, could not be brought before the body of the membership. No pastor would wish, and no Protestant congregation would endure, to have them decided by the pastor without representation and consultation.

The official members are, then, a committee officially chosen and authorized to consult and decide in the direction and government of the church, the carrying on of its work, and the administration of its affairs. This government and administration in the Methodist Episcopal Church is always subject to the rules and regulations of its book of Discipline. Hence it follows that the official members are the representatives and leaders of the local church chosen from the body of its members.

Definition of
official mem-
bers.

They are the representatives of the membership of the local church; but in a connectional organization like ours they should never forget that they represent the common interests of the great body of members of the whole

Loyalty to
connectional
interests.

Church. Loyalty to the polity, the administration, and the work of the entire Church ought peculiarly to mark the thought and conduct of the lay officary of the Church, the same loyalty which we yield to our civil organization or State and national government. We may not agree that all things are done in the best possible manner, but we know if they are not there is in the Constitution of the State provision for a remedy. An honorable man would scorn to hold a political office and use it to thwart the administration or party or community which had honored him. So all may not agree in regard to all details of church administration or government. All must recognize there is a legal way provided to express our dissent. Once in four years the humblest member may petition the General Conference for a change in law or usage and be heard. The various ways of changing the laws in the State are quite as effective in a Church which has adopted lay representation and so changed the policy of more than three quarters of a century. In the meantime the Church has a right to ask of her office-bearers an especial loyalty and care for her connectional interests. This means not a mere acquiescence in detail of administration, but such information in regard to them, and such intelligent and hearty cooperation, as shall make their influence by word and example potent for good in the Church and community. This will not require the perusal of many volumes in a course of study, for men wish to know the present work and needs of our connectional organizations, not their history ; but it does make it necessary for every official member to take and read some Church paper, if he is to be fitted for his work,

or to keep abreast of the times, or be in line with the advancing army of the Church of God in the earth.

The official members specially represent the membership of the local church. They should be in such sympathy and accord with them that they not only know temperaments and peculiarities of individuals, but the general trend of the thought and feeling of the entire body. Where the class system is in use, and means, as it ought, an efficient lay pastorate and supervision, no knowledge of his people by the pastor, however accurate and extended, but may be wisely supplemented by the official board. The connection ought to be so evident and close that the mass of the membership feel not that they escape responsibility and wholly commit these affairs to the officary of the church, but that they can make their sentiments and opinions known, and that they will have due weight with the controlling body. This will not be so much by petition and resolution as by frank and fraternal consultation and the pledge which the character of these men gives that they would not countenance anything distasteful to the majority of the membership they represent. The good of the whole is the aim of the whole board, and the known opinion of the mass of the membership is quite as much a factor in the decisions reached as the opinions of the officary themselves. The condition desired is that these representatives shall have the respect, sympathy, and confidence of the entire body which they serve. This, retained by frank, upright, and consistent course of official action, makes any church strong. Pastors and their official advisers

Representation
of the local
church.

are saved from mistakes and blunders which would be inevitable but for this knowledge and sympathy.

The decisions of the official members affect the whole membership and are of interest to them. They have a right to know them and the reasons or explanations by which they are supported or their application is made evident. But the course of the debate, what individuals said, or who opposed and who favored a course of action, is not the property of the church. No secretary or other official has a right to give these without the consent of the persons concerned or of the body as a whole. The design is to have as free and frank discussion as is possible, and men must feel free to say in a committee of representatives what they would not care to have set forth without the modification of the attendant circumstances and the explanation of the course of the debate. This applies to all cases of character which may be under discussion, and to all important measures where there is a pronounced difference of opinion which threatens the peace of the church.

The official member is not only a representative, he is a leader in the life and activities of the church.

Opportunity
for Christian
leadership. No age or people ever presented such grand opportunities for consecrated leadership as our time and this generation. The age of democracy opens an arena for leadership such as was never before shown to the world. Capable men, men of character, men of light and leading, never before had such opportunities, such ample means, to realize the grandest designs. Where the intelligence, the sympathy, the resources of wealth and power of a great democracy are at the service of an

able and consecrated leadership the results may be such as to mark an era in the history of nations and of civilization. The opportunities for leadership in the Christian Church were never greater than now in Protestant America. What John Wesley wrought in the last century, and William Booth in this, are only examples of the possibilities of wise and consecrated leadership. Some, perhaps, are looking for the reunion of the Protestant Churches. This fair vision will never be realized until through some great spiritual uplift guided by men commissioned by the divine Spirit there shall come a purer and nobler type of Christian life, a broader, clearer spiritual vision, a truer charity, a unity of aim and a cooperation of methods which shall lift the Church out of all the narrowness and littleness of the past to a comprehension of and communion with God's thought and the divine purpose for his conquering Church.

This involves a right conception of leadership in the thousands of local churches. A leader must have clear conceptions of the present condition of things. He must see the thing to be done and the way to do it. A leader must lead. That means accepting responsibility and incurring risk. It means readiness to act and suffer, to do and sacrifice. No leader can ask a church and its members to assume undertakings and obligations of which, according to his ability, he does not take more than a proportionate share. Faith is as requisite to leadership in a local church as in preaching the Gospel to the heathen. Let us read God's promises to his covenant people in the prophets and see the first requisite of Christian leadership, an implicit reliance upon

Conditions of
leadership.

the plan and purpose of Almighty God. Read the work of the founding of the Church, in the Acts and epistles, and learn that to faith and sacrifice we must add undying hope if we are to honor God or save men. Above all, read the gospels and learn the secret of Christ—such a love for men as made the laying down of his life for them bring the Son of God from heaven to tread with unreluctant feet the path to the garden and the cross. A leadership so actuated and inspired will never fail of following and results. It will thrill the hearts, help and ennoble the lives of men. The ministry has no monopoly of such leadership. Our great need, and sometimes, thank God, grandly supplied, is for such leadership in our local churches. This does not imply the neglect, but the much better care, of all the *minutiæ* and detail which so largely contribute to success. What reformer more practical than General Booth, or what evangelist than D. L. Moody? The narrow finances of a small charge demand faithfulness, consecrated business ability, executive talent, tact, courtesy, and spiritual courage just as urgently as many a great enterprise which enlists the hearts of thousands and the resources of a great denomination. Leadership is making the most of present opportunities and inspiring others to like effort; seeing clearly, and after careful deliberation acting resolutely and promptly.

But the highest kind of leadership always takes in the future as well as the present. Educational institutions and churches have been crippled for scores of years, and for more than one generation, by a leadership which looked only to present abilities and surroundings and disregarded the

Leadership and
future needs.

future. From all our larger churches and in all growing communities the demand is for a leadership that shall command the future as well as the present—that shall fit the church in its appliances and work not only for the urgent needs of the present, but for a future of yet greater influence. What is the *most* we can plan and do for God should be the watchword of Christian leadership.

There is without doubt a prosaic, nay, even a repellent side to the lay leadership of a Protestant congregation. Our churches are supported on the voluntary principle.

Prosaic side of
Christian leadership.

Not seldom is the official member brought into contact with the selfishness and financial meanness of men and women belonging to Christian congregations and to the Christian Church. Through the inveterate lack of responsibility or stinginess of the people the man who has already given all he is able to give, after days and weeks of pleading and persuading, is brought to the disagreeable dilemma of paying for men in better circumstances than himself or seeing the name of his church dishonored and its influence seriously injured in the community. This has occurred many times. It ought never to occur again. Proper business methods, with strict and careful administration and the cultivation by example and precept of a high sense of Christian financial honor, will render such an experience impossible. One layman of influence can so raise the ethical standard in regard to these things that the church with which he is connected will meet its financial obligations as fully and as promptly as any business corporation in the community. This requires the right use of the right

means, but has been done again and again. The Church in general has made a large advance in these things. Our stronger churches command ability and use of resources, which makes success assured by means of small and uniform as well as large contributions. In the smaller charges, with the passing away of the older generation and the adoption of business methods actuated by a Christian spirit, these financial obstacles will be things of the past, except where through changes of population or other and deeper causes the Church loses its hold on the communities.

Let no one despise the breadth of opportunity offered by the local church, even if small in numbers, for the highest kind of Christian leadership. A Methodist pastor ought to so impress himself upon a church and community during his term of service that it will bear his mark for at least a generation. A Christian layman can so entirely change the tone of a church and exalt its ideals as to more than double its influence. No pastor of experience but can point to some one man who, by the depth of his Christian experience, purity of character, breadth of charity, fraternal courtesy, self-denying zeal, or soundness of judgment has transformed church life and work and widely influenced the community.

This kind of service never finds mention in the newspapers, and is seldom spoken of before the congregation. Its rewards come in the prosperity and growth of the kingdom of God and in the "Well done" at the end of the course. But all the rewards are not of this future and impersonal kind. In one of the villages in Genesee Conference,

sits every Sunday morning in his large upholstered chair near the pulpit Father Austin Atchinson, in his one hundred and second year. On his hundredth birthday that church was filled with his friends. Former pastors were present, and the chair he occupies every Sunday was given to him by those who loved him. For over seventy years as steward and class leader on the Parma Circuit and the Spencerport Charge he gave time and means and faithfully served God and the church. In his old age that church gathered round him with a respect, an affection, and a veneration that children could not easily surpass. Such work is not in vain. God honors it, and men bless the doer and his deeds.

CHAPTER IV.

THE OFFICIAL MEMBERS IN THEIR RELATION TO EACH OTHER.

“Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.”—1 Peter iii, 8.

To men thinking superficially it must often seem that the doing of the work of the Christian Church by pastors and good men and women must be delightful occupation. It seems to them far removed from the cares, perplexities, oppositions, and trials of ordinary business or social life. Sometimes a young man coming into such relations, and finding the work different from what he supposed, suffers a grievous shock. To most men it would seem sufficient to write under the heading of this chapter, “The rules of ordinary intercourse among gentlemen, among Christian gentlemen, are all the guide needed in official relations with the representatives of that Christian society which is called the Church.” A more serious consideration will show that no work God gives men requires more consecration and devotion of spirit, more soundness of judgment, or more real self-denying love for them than the building up of the kingdom of God in the earth. Let us consider some of the essential elements of the work of the lay official arising from the necessity of the case.

If in a meeting of bank directors the president should arise and say, "The corporation is losing money and impairing its capital," Difficulties to overcome. there would be instant call for the best thought and counsel of the whole board to meet the threatened danger. Now, the Church is a body sure to lose each year. Some members die, some remove, some fall out by the way. A passive policy means certain death. Only such activity as shall win and keep the children, gather in those who make new homes in the community, and secure each year accessions from those who have been either irreligious or indifferent will make the Church strong and influential for its mission among men. Suppose at a meeting of a business corporation the president lays before the officers the facts of the situation. A strike is impending, or prices have suffered a sharp and unexpected decline, or trusted agents have embezzled the funds of the corporation, or a financial panic has begun, and decisive measures must be taken or complete and overwhelming ruin will end at once their cares and their fortunes. What care and anxiety! What necessity for decisive action! Sometimes such emergencies arise in the Christian Church. All the foes without a church cannot do it the harm of bad men and women within. In the circle of the disciples was Judas; Peter had to deal with Ananias and Sapphira; Paul with moral difficulties at Corinth which were as urgent and required as much wisdom and resolution as any financial crisis. These come only rarely, but there is the constant warfare of the world, the devil, and the flesh against the life of the Church and the purity and faith of its members. All these are a care

to the official members. If Simon Magnus strives to undo the work of a revival at Samaria, or Elymas to hinder the progress of one in Cyprus, not only are the apostles, like Peter and Paul, but the whole Church, and especially the official members, concerned for the result.

In addition to these direct assaults upon the faith and purity of the Church there is the care to meet the more insidious ones which come from the intrusion of strong personalities, or mere willfulness, and the rise of party spirit among good men and women in the Christian Church. None of Paul's writings are of more practical value to the Christian Church than those which deal with these things. The parties of Apollos, Cephas, and Paul have had their successors, and men with the spirit and methods of the Judaizers of Paul's day have not been unknown in the later ages of the Christian Church. With gratitude we acknowledge that the Spirit of Christ attending the reception of his Gospel more and more drives out these personal and party dissensions.

Under their care and supervision come the teaching of the Sunday school and the training of young people's societies in the Church. Besides all this, who is poor, or sick, or in trouble, or offended, and it does not come to the ears, to the judgment, and the assistance of the official board? These things come to the official membership through the pastor. The burden in the first instance comes upon him. They come to share it with him in their counsels and cooperation. There is another large section of the work of the church that comes upon them in the first instance and in which he gives counsel and cooperation.

Sharing pas-
toral care.

Under this head come the financial interests of the church. The crucial difficulty of church finance, as it relates to current ex-
Care of the finances.
 penses in this country, is that the expenses of the church, the salaries of those who serve it and the care of its property, are a fixed sum. These salaries are too often pitifully small, but the expenses are certain and fixed. The income to meet these expenses is the voluntary gifts of the church and congregation. These vary every year from death, removal, or the changing financial circumstances and resources of the contributors. To meet a fixed expense with a varying income, never very large, is the problem. This can be done, and done successfully, in all classes of charges. It often is not done. The reasons for failure and the conditions of success will be set forth in the chapter on stewards and their work; but the statement of the problem will show that in church finance there is an imperative demand for the promptness, energy, and sound judgment which command success in ordinary business life in conjunction with those rarer qualities of popular sympathy and leadership which secure the cooperation of the people in putting the common church interests above personal and selfish considerations. Besides these are the expenses, sometimes extraordinary, of the care of the buildings and property of the church. Then there are the consultation, criticism, and support of the current pastoral administration, and the responsibility of the Quarterly Conference to represent correctly the needs, interests, and wishes of the church when there is to be a change in the pastoral office. It will be seen at once that the

best talent of the church will find ample scope for its exercise in the work which falls to the lay officary of the humblest church in Methodism.

The men who do this work will have as much to Individual characteristics of official members. meet with in the individual characteristics of those who compose the official board or the Quarterly Conference as any other body of representatives who must deliberate, decide, and work in common. We expect these things in a legislature, a common council, or a town or school board. As they imply no moral defect, why not in the lay officary of the church? These men all have differing temperaments, surroundings, and methods. Because of these differing views and interests they are chosen to consult. Then, as Macaulay has pointed out in a brilliant passage, wherever concerns of government or common action are decided there will always be two parties, the conservative and the progressive.* It is right there should be both with their determining characteristics. Only so, by a comparison of views, can a wise judgment be found, a right decision reached, and the common mind expressed. This means that the most diverse modes of thinking, standards of judgment, and personal opinions will find expression in the gatherings of the officers of the church. How can all these clashing views, sentiments, and often interests be brought into the harmony of that common action which shall honor God, advance the church, and bless the community? By earnest, sincere, prayerful deliberation. But that deliberation will the better reach the desired result by the observance of certain fixed principles and rules. All deliberative

* *History of England*, vol. i, p. 76.

assemblies have rules of order without the observance of which no procedure can be had. The meetings of the lay officary are no exception to the necessity for such acknowledged and uniform rules. But let us first set forth a few principles which lie at the foundation of all rules.

All members of such boards or Conferences are upon a footing of complete equality so far as right is concerned. The young man who has just entered the board as representing the Sunday school or the Epworth League has the same rights as the father in Israel who has been for forty or fifty years a class leader or a steward, and whose knowledge and experience of church affairs are as evident as the other's complete ignorance. The day laborer has the same right as the millionaire. The atmosphere, bearing, and manners suited to the assembly or meeting is one of complete equality. So far as right or privilege is concerned all are equal; so far as weight and influence in counsel and in determining a course of action, there will be as much difference as there are different individuals. No overbearing or domineering manner should be tolerated. While in such a gathering all servility is out of place, due deference and respect should be shown to age, experience, and ability.

Equality of
right and
privilege.

Hence it follows that the freest expression of opinion is desired; a perfect frankness in setting forth what seems to be the right mode of action, with an equally frank acknowledgment that upon receiving further information or more weighty reasons there would follow a prompt acquiescence in a different course or procedure. Only in

Free expres-
sion of opinion.

such perfect freedom of debate is there assurance that the decision reached expresses the best thought and common judgment of the body.

It is equally important to keep in mind that the subject-matter of discussion is a proposition or motion, and not a person. No man is fitted to take part in such deliberations who is not ready to concede that a man may differ utterly from him in regard to the expediency of certain measures and be his equal in purity of motive and acuteness and weight of intellect. No man in a discussion has a right to impose his will or set up his prejudice or interest against the common good.

Christian courtesy, the subduing of our own personality, a care for the feelings of others, should pervade all our common business and association. In such a board there is no room for the personal following of one or two men or the ranging of its members in rival parties upon personal grounds. Love for Christ and his cause must keep us above this.

In cases of conscience, where a man says, "I cannot conscientiously agree with the majority, or support the policy they have decided upon," he owes it to his fellow-representatives to say so there, and there to enter his protest. This may bring about a harmony of action or modify the execution of the proposed plan. Or he may with dignity or good feeling withdraw from the body as not able to support its policy. He has no right to stay in the board simply to stir up strife or to keep opposition alive. In a case of expediency a man may withhold his assent and ask to be excused from the active support of a policy which he will not oppose. These

Conscientious
dissent.

cases are rare. More failures than from any other cause are made by church boards in raising matters of expediency to the plane of those involving the defense of moral or religious principle.

After a frank, open, and impersonal discussion upon all matters of expediency, which compose ninety one hundredths of the business coming before the official members, when the decision is reached all members without reserve should

United support
of official ac-
tion.

support the action taken; those of the minority as heartily as those of the majority. The strength of the lay officary in its work for any church and influence in any community is the force of the united support given to all decisions which have been reached in a regularly appointed and legitimate manner. Only so can we present a united front to the world and secure that support to our plans that will make successful their execution and advance the kingdom of God in the earth.

Those who take part in these duties should be trustworthy. Every member should feel that his character and reputation are perfectly safe when speaking his mind with the utmost freedom.

Trustworthi-
ness.

He should feel that every individual present would be too honorable to report anything said, or any action had, in a light which would reflect unfavorably upon the motives and spirit of those favoring or opposing it. All we be brethren, and the character and interest of one should be the care of all. Thus all tentative action, cases of discipline and character, and many matters of pastoral consultation are private in their nature. The official members should be men that can be trusted to keep to themselves what is of this

nature, and what by premature publication would injure the interest of the church they are chosen to serve.

No man should be chosen to an official position or retained there if his sole function is to grumble and find fault, to continually oppose every proposed course of action, the will of the majority, or the pastor. Opposition grounded on knowledge or principle is to be desired; it may be changed to acquiescence, or overcome by deliberation, or it may bring around to its view the majority. But opposition which is constitutional in the man making it, or is the result of infirmity or age, is not to be desired and cannot promote the work of the church. Only men realizing a common interest and obligation can aid in the serious and important work which falls to the lay officary of Methodism. With a common purpose and a sense of united responsibility every meeting of the officials of the church will advance its interests.

No satisfactory records can be made or business kept in hand unless the members become familiar with ordinary parliamentary rules and observe them. The rules applying to Methodist assemblies are printed in this volume and should be thoroughly mastered.

Let no one think that the cares and difficulties, the annoyances and anxieties, outweigh the valuable results of cooperation and association in the work of the Christian Church. Lifelong friendships are made; after long service fellow-official members have borne to the tomb, followed by a mourning church, the remains of those

Parliamentary law and usage.
Rewards of this common service.

who in this work have faithfully and efficiently served the Church of the living God.

There is no school for an intelligent, consecrated, progressive young man to better develop and train the strong and commanding traits of character, and those qualities of self-control, deference to others, courtesy, and tact that fit for popular leadership, than service in the official boards and Quarterly Conferences of Methodism.

An idea of the value of these church societies in one phase of their work, and of the leadership which under God makes them vigorous and helpful, may be gained from Professor Allen in his *Continuity of Christian Thought*, page 376:

“Another distinctive feature of the evangelical awakening, whether in England, Germany, or America, was its social character. It did what the Church was not doing—it bound men closely together in groups or societies, making them feel this close relationship to each other by making them realize their relation to God. . . . Such may be called the first practical step toward dispelling the illusion that society was based upon some selfish contract, by which a check was put upon those natural tendencies which would otherwise tend to their destruction. The idea of the Church was reappearing in its original beauty and simplicity, as a form of association growing out of the very necessities of the religious life—a prophecy of a regenerated society which has its being in God.”

CHAPTER V.

THE OFFICIAL MEMBERS AND THE PASTOR.

"For we are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building."—1 Cor. iii, 9.

To the right relationship between the pastor and the official members of his church three things are essential: mutual self-respect, sympathy, and cordial cooperation.

If the pastor has not the respect of the best and most influential members of his church his possibilities of usefulness are most seriously crippled, and the sooner he seeks another field of labor the better for him and for the church. If he cannot anywhere command the respect of this class of men he should cease anywhere to be a pastor. If he cannot respect the official board he is in equally evil case. If he cannot secure a change of its *personnel* he should give way to a man who can.

Sympathy is essential to the best work of any man.

It may be the sympathy of the home, of his fellow-workers, of those who receive the benefit of his labors, or the constant sense that he is in such union with God that the divine heart and will are moved and work with him. Somewhere sympathy must gush forth like water from the smitten rock if the best results of a man's life are to be obtained. This is peculiarly true of the pastor. His sympathy is drawn upon each day of his pastorate

for the sick, the afflicted, the poor, the unfortunate, and the dying. If he is constantly to give he must sometimes receive. By none should this need be answered more generously than by the members of the official board. No sorrow or affliction could come to them or to those they represent but he would feel it. He ought to know that in his personal concerns, and most of all in his work, he has their warm and active sympathy.

The truest success of any church rests upon the largest measure of earnest cooperation of the pastor and his official advisers. A Cooperation.
 pastor may draw great crowds to the services by his magnetic eloquence, but if he does not have the cooperation of the leaders among the laymen the church will not be built up nor permanent strength gained to its membership. A board may be united, active, and progressive, but if they have a lax, imprudent, or inefficient pastor the Christian leadership of that community will go to some other congregation and church. Constant and harmonious cooperation will alone produce the results which the Head of the Church waits to see realized by his redeemed on the earth.

This cooperation is shown in three divisions of their common work: the spiritual work of the church, its temporal concerns, the foundation and dissolution of the pastoral relation and proper estimate of its value.

The main work of a church and its pastor is spiritual work. The end of all its care and Cooperation in
spiritual work.
 striving is a spiritual end—"the present-
 ing every man perfect in Christ Jesus." The sympathy needed is sympathy in this work. The cooperation required is first and always cooperation in the spiritual life and activities of the church.

Cooperation in spiritual work means the regular attendance of the official members, with their families and households, upon the Sabbath services. Sunday services of the church. Nothing can take the place of a full official board with their families in accustomed seats on Sunday morning. These are the natural and official leaders of the flock. Whatever obligation rests upon other members rests with tenfold force upon those whose example and influence necessarily have so much weight. No other class of men can so help the evening service by their attendance as the official members of the church. Observation and experience show that churches which have crowded evening audiences not only have a large attendance of the young people, and a preacher capable of interesting them, but a full representation of the official members. This signifies that the leading men of the congregation are interested in the evening service, believe the pastor has something to say worth hearing, and that the worship and influence and direct Christian work of that culminating hour of the holy day is worth their personal sacrifice, their prayer, and cooperation. There are reasons personal and domestic which excuse from this service; but if we are to build up strong churches, which are to lay controlling hands upon the young life of the community, these reasons must be strong ones to avail and should rarely be presented.

What is true of the attendance of the official members upon the Sabbath services is yet more emphatically true of the midweek services, the class and prayer meetings of the church. Nothing can make up for the persistent

Attendance
upon Sabbath
services.

Attendance
upon midweek
services.

neglect of these means of grace by the official members of the church. The standard of piety is lowered, the religious character becomes flabby in the church where its leading laymen do not delight in prayer and Christian communion. No man with the demands of an active business life upon him can give all his evenings to the church; no man with a family of growing children around him should give most of his evenings to this work; but men in ordinary health, who are not called by their business out of the community for a large portion of the time, can so arrange their work and divide their time as to be regularly at the midweek services of the church. Make these services so they will interest those members, and those of their households who should be with them, and you will have meetings that will attract the members of the congregation and men and women unsaved.

In the economy of Protestant Churches there are certain seasons when special and united Cooperation in revival work. efforts are made to win the attention of the careless and the sinful to the message of salvation and the necessity for a religious life. These pre-eminently demand the cooperation of the entire official membership with the pastor. Methodism was born of the great revival of the eighteenth century. It has lived and grown where revival influences and agencies have been cherished and had their legitimate place accorded them in our church life. Other Churches may live without revivals; we cannot. Revivals will change in their character and methods, but not in their aim and their right to the helpful cooperation of the entire body of the church, and especially of its official representatives. Such cooperation, with the

divine blessing, will make the revivals of later times all and more than the earlier seasons of refreshing were to the Church and to the unsaved and irreligious around them.

In spiritual things the pastor needs the cooperation of the official members in his plans for pastoral work. Their wisdom and sympathy in counsel, their encouragement by way of suggestion and assistance, are invaluable. The knowledge that this work is of common interest is a great inspiration to the pastor in his labors.

So in all plans for charitable work and in all reform movements the pastor ought not to stand out alone before the community. After common counsel and deliberation the words of the pastor on these themes ought to have all the weight that the united consent of the church and its leaders can give it. A pastor is a leader; he must lead. To lead he must be in advance, but for the best interests of the community, moral and religious, he ought not to appear as leading a forlorn hope, but a united army with its advancing columns keeping even step. This can only be the case where the officers of the army, the commanders of corps, divisions, and brigades, are in sympathy, and zealously share in the work of the commander.

This cooperation, of course, extends to the temporal economy of the church. The first essential to this end is regular monthly meetings of the pastor and lay officary. If, as is sometimes unfortunately the case, the pastor is forgetful or neglectful in calling the board together, then a resolution should be passed making

Plans for pastoral work.

Cooperation in charities and reforms.

Cooperation in temporal economy; regular official meetings.

some stated time, as the first Monday evening of the month, the regular time of meeting, and then come together regularly whether called or not. No body of lay officials can render needed service who do not meet regularly for deliberation and arrange for the proper discharge of the duties which are imposed upon them by the administration of the affairs of the church. In our smaller charges the full attendance upon the monthly meetings of the official board and the Quarterly Conferences would do more than any other one thing to put the temporal affairs of the church upon a sound business basis.

Not only attendance upon these meetings, but willingness to face the necessities of the work, and prompt resolution and action, are imperatively demanded if the condition of the finances of the church be not a reproach to it in the community. Neglect and procrastination have as injurious results as absolute betrayal. The man who always puts his own business and personal concerns first, and gives to the Lord for the service of his Church the scraps and remnants of his time, is unworthy of an official position. Indifference must give way to a sense of personal responsibility, lingering delays to a readiness of mind and promptness of action, in many places, before the church can expect great things or their faith secure a divine blessing which shall turn their captivity as the streams in the south. The fundamental principle of all business relations between the pastor and the official board is that church business has the same paramount obligation of honesty and conditions of success that are required in any other business. To fail to meet church obligations is just

Prompt, efficient action.

as dishonest and quite as injurious as to fail to meet those of ordinary business. There is a failure which the divine word calls "robbing God." If the servant of the church, pastor or otherwise, makes a gift to the church, that is one thing; if the church fails to pay because of the lack of timely effort on the part of the official members, that is quite another. No church can escape the consequences of this kind of dishonesty. It is all-important in church business that there should be definite, set times for payment. The Methodist Church has saved many a country church where other Churches have died out, by the requirement of annual settlements on account of our Annual Conference sessions. We shall have the respect of the community, and greatly lessen the trials of the itinerancy while lightening the burdens of the official members, when we insist upon a quarterly settlement, at least; and wherever possible a weekly or a monthly one. Many churches pay weekly, and so settle all their bills. This is the New Testament rule (1 Cor. xvi, 1, 2). The plan of frequent and prompt payment and balance—monthly, or if possible weekly—is the goal to be reached, and this will be for the best interests of all contributors. The church which pays its bills promptly is the church that will have the confidence of business men, and in increasing measure their support and membership. With this must go a strict accountability and frequent printed or written reports of the condition of the church to the congregation, so that each person may read, or, if necessary, preserve, the reports. Nothing so increases interest and promotes liberality as a full knowledge of all financial resources and expenses. There is nothing known to the official mem-

bers about the current expenses of the church that could not with advantage be known to the whole congregation. The knowledge that frequent reports are required will make men anxious to do their work in the proper time. In all these things the congregation should be taken into the full confidence of the board. To secure these results there must be the persistent use of such a system as shall cause every member of the church and congregation to feel a personal interest and responsibility for the financial condition of the church. "To every man his work" should be the motto; to see that every man, woman, and child is interested, if only by a contribution of a penny a week or a penny a month, should be the aim of church finance. To this must be added the scriptural injunction, the church obligation, and the frequent application of the principle of proportionate giving.

How should the official members regard the pastor in his official relation? "Very highly in love for his work's sake." He is the spiritual leader and shepherd of the flock; the things which strengthen his hands for this service should be accorded him. He is the recognized teacher of religion in the church and the community, the leader in the worship of the congregation. He should be a man whose character and conduct are fitting such solemn duties, and should have that measure of respect and influence which will enable the man and the pastor best to serve the church and the community. He is not infallible, and in his judgment will need the same charity which men extend to each other. Whatever piety, devotion,

Value of the
pastoral office;
treatment of
the pastor.

talents, or acquirements he may possess should have the most generous estimate and be put to the best use. Nothing is less wise than comparing other men's talents and work to depreciate the pastor. Helpful comparisons only should be made. Pastors differ. God made them so. But if your pastor is called of God to his work he has some qualification for his office in larger measure than other men. Use the pastor where he is strong; so will you build up the Church of Christ. If in any part of the work he is weak supplement the weakness, remembering that no man is equally strong in all parts of his work. Do nothing to flatter the pride of a pastor, but everything to make his service more efficient. All pastors should be, and most are, gentlemen. They have learned self-control and have regard to the rights and feelings of others. They ought to receive the treatment which gentlemen deserve—that New Testament courtesy which puts ourselves in the place of others, and, when we act, by the manner of our action quite as much as by what we do, commends our Christian thoughtfulness and fraternal sympathy. Expressions of sympathy are always expected from him, and being heartily felt are freely given. Why should not men in their official intercourse take care to guard each other's feelings and express the common interest they feel?

The pastor is the chairman of the official board, of the Sunday school board, of the Quarterly Conference committees, and in the absence of the presiding elder of the Quarterly Conference. In his place as chairman he is still pastor. He should be accorded the right of suggestion and the free expression of opin-

ion, though this should never be used to hinder the freest deliberation. While he presides, still the one thing needful for the successful arrangement and administration of the work is the frankest cooperation.

In the matter of pastoral change the principles of Christian courtesy will generally prevail Change of pastor. and be sufficient. But if they do not the welfare of the Church should not be sacrificed. If a pastor endeavors to "pack" a Quarterly Conference and thus secure his return he should be strenuously resisted. In almost any event the bishop and cabinet will right any wrong if a proper statement is made. On the other hand, if a faction seeks to remove a pastor whose return is generally desired the wishes of an insignificant minority should not deprive the church of the continuance of a successful pastorate. Finally, if there is any considerable minority who earnestly seek a change, the pastor and church should remember that there are other churches who will give increased prosperity to the administration of the retiring pastor, and other pastors who will minister successfully to the bereaved church. In all things let pastor and church seek chiefly the approval of the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls.

CHAPTER VI.

THE OFFICIAL MEMBERS AND THE PRESIDING ELDER.

“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine.”—1 Tim. v, 17.

Office and work of the presiding elder. If it should be granted that the Methodist Episcopal Church is presbyterian in its orders, it is unmistakably episcopal in its supervision. This supervision, as much as the itinerancy, is essential to its life. The one without the other in this country is impossible. This supervision in all connectional interests and in the broader aspects of church life belongs to the bishops. In all its practical details in ninety-nine one hundredths of the churches of Episcopal Methodism it falls to the presiding elder. Without his close personal familiarity with the facts and requirements, both of the pastors and the charges, the friction in the itinerancy would be so increased as to threaten its continuance. The work of this supervision in the local church may be presented under a few heads :

1. The moral condition of the churches, including cases of discipline among the preachers and the people.
2. The religious life and work of the church.
3. Observance of the Discipline of the Church; conformity of administration to polity and order.
4. The training of the church—all societies and

institutions for the education and culture of the ministry and laity.

5. The care of the current finances of the church—pastor's salary, current expenses, etc.

6. The oversight of the church property.

7. A special supervision of young men just entering their work, and a constant care to see that the right men are raised up and prepared for the ministry.

8. The advocacy and care of all connectional interests.

9. The episcopal oversight in the absence of the bishop, and his counselor in making the appointments. He must be a pastor of pastors and of churches.

10. Constant forethought and purposed action toward the wider and nobler development of the life and work of the church. He must be ever planning for the growth and future greatness of the work committed to his care.

In these ten groups the care, the thought, and the work of the presiding elder will mainly divide itself. There is no other function of his work more important than the care for the moral life of the ministry and churches, and, thank God, of less frequent use. Methodism has always exercised a strict supervision over the moral life of its ministry. No other ministry is purer or more self-denying. The ministry of some other communions may have a higher average of literary culture. No other of anything like its size in Christendom has so few who use intoxicating liquors or tobacco. In spite of the most efficient safeguards a bad man may get into the Methodist ministry. In no other is he so

Moral discipline.

sure of detection and summary prosecution, and this more largely than from any other cause through the office of the presiding elder. There may be conditions of the moral life of a church which call imperatively for the exercise of discipline. Neither the pastor nor the official members may feel able alone to perform the needed work. Methodism has in the presiding elder a man who from his position is impartial, whose knowledge of men and affairs and whose judgment ought to be beyond the average of the ministry, who will never fail nor shrink in such an ordeal. Of course, all cases of appeal in the trial of church members come before him as president of the Quarterly Conference. In the absence of the bishop he decides all questions of law in the Quarterly and District Conferences.

The quarterly supervision of the presiding elder ought to largely and helpfully affect the Religious life. religious life of the church and the community. He cannot initiate measures at the fitting time, nor follow them to a successful conclusion, as can a pastor. He is in no sense a substitute for him, but he may always encourage both the pastor and the church. He may see how to remove or surmount obstacles better than those who are so close to them that their vision is less clear. In all cases he can add the weight of his character and influence to the work in progress. He can more generally promote revivals than any other officer in the Church.

It is, of course, his care more than anyone's else, to see that the Discipline and usages of the Church be honored in a wise administration and a consistent and obedient observance. In a com-

munion covering so wide an extent of territory, employing so many young and partially trained preachers amid so wide a diversity of nationalities and conditions of men, the value of this common Discipline regularly and universally enforced is inestimable.

The teaching and training office inheres in the ministry. The presiding elder, more than Training of
the Church. by his preaching and his example, is to commend the love for and proper value of sound learning. All educational institutions of the Church on his district are subject to his oversight and report. He is given special charge concerning all Sunday schools and young people's societies. At the fourth Quarterly Conference he should ask, "Who of our young people are in attendance upon our church schools?" All that aids the culture of the community is of interest to him. The spiritual and intellectual life of the ministry and membership is greatly quickened and helped by the conventions, institutes, and conferences of the district. There is no wise pastor but recognizes the value of competent leadership to this end.

In our country charges—and they are the large majority—the oversight of the finances by the Oversight of
finances. presiding elder is of the last importance.

We hold these rural communities with a stronger influence than any other Protestant Church. Whether they remain Christian or drift through religious indifference into spiritual barbarism depends more than on any other on the Methodist Church; more also on the supervision of self-denying, competent presiding elders than on any other agency in use by the Church. The successful endeavor to secure prompt and full payment of ministerial salaries and the current ex-

penses of the church in the face of a changing population can only be made by a revival church and a definite and systematic supervision. We shall save our cities only as we increase our influence in the country. The majority of the leading laymen of our city churches are often country-bred. They owe largely their success in life to the moral and religious principles received through the ministry and fellowship of the country churches.

The oversight of all church property, so far as its location, title, insurance, indebtedness, etc., are concerned, is vested in the presiding elder.

Church property. The amount of property thus saved to the church and preserved from loss is a large sum each year.

The hope of any Church is in its young men, especially its young men preparing for or entering the ministry. Our Church probably will never confine the work of the ministry to those who have graduated from colleges and theological schools. There is all the greater need for presiding elders who shall see that the Conference Course of Study is a solemn reality, and that scholarly habits are acquired by the young preachers beginning their work under him. Of even greater importance to the Church are the ability and character of the men to whom he gives their first appointment and whose faces he sets toward the door of the Annual Conference. In no part of our work is there need for greater care and more consecrated effort. Presiding elders should have all needed help, but also the careful criticism of the brethren, and be held to a rigid responsibility for this part of their work.

They have charge of the interests of all the great

publishing, educational, and benevolent agencies of the Church. Very seldom does a district make advance in the number of periodicals taken, the number of young people in our schools, or in our great benevolences without the wise and faithful leadership of the presiding elder. This includes a care for the connectional sentiments and interests in general, as against all merely individual or congregational tendencies.

The presiding elder, in the absence of the bishop, exercises supervision. The aggregate expenses of the presiding eldership in Methodism amount to a considerable sum. Supervision of large interests and complicated affairs always costs something. The men fit for that work are seldom unemployed. They usually fill some considerable place before their appointment. The question of the cost of supervision is not one of the amount paid, but of the quality of the supervision obtained. There is a cheap supervision which is dear at any price, and there is a kind of supervision which will always yield a larger return to the Church than any salary received will ever express. The influence of example is potent, and the presiding elder who is pious, learned, faithful, and efficient will help the work as few others on his district can.

The value of the presiding elder in making appointments in our system is so well understood that it need only be mentioned. In a Conference of three hundred pastoral charges if the bishop knows personally a score of the pastors and as many of the charges, even superficially, the number is above the average. The information upon which he relies in forming his judgment must, in the great majority of cases, come from

the presiding elders, either individually or collectively. The bishop in his personal intercourse at Conference with pastors and laymen receives assistance in coming to conclusions, but his main reliance must be upon the men who have exercised supervision during the year.

The presiding eldership has saved and strengthened the churches of rural Methodism, so that in the coun-

try we easily outrank all other denominations. We can under adequate leadership, with our eyes open to changed surroundings and the necessity of connectional co-

operation, achieve in cities a victory even greater than one hundred years in the country districts have shown. A Methodist presiding elder in a great city ought to be the peer of any bishop of the Episcopal or Roman Churches. He ought to command the respect of his brethren in the ministry and the chief of the laity for his piety, ability, character, and power to secure results. If he be such a man, and open his eyes to his opportunities, he can have such cooperation and win such increase of Christian efficiency as no other Church can command. Leadership is not everything, but for success leadership is the first thing. May God raise up in our great cities presiding elders who in all the qualities of consecrated Christian leadership stand in the very front rank of the Church of our time!

What ought to be the relations of the official members to the men doing such work in the Methodist Episcopal Church? Loyalty to the office and its work; esteem for the man who does this work according to the measure of present usefulness; the most cordial cooperation with him in the work which concerns all. The

His relation to the work in the country and in the city.

Presiding elders and the official members.

relations between pastors and presiding elders are varied and delicate. Any pastor who has had the visits and counsels of a strong and successful presiding elder will always have green spots in his memory. The district meeting, under a man of forethought and force, will always be stimulating and inspiring. On the other hand, all the presiding elder's work and care will go for nothing unless he find in the pastorate consecrated, able, and successful winners of men. In these ways often lifelong friendships are made. In more than one Conference the young men bear witness to no ordinary training and leadership.

The relations between the official members of the district and the presiding elder ought to be equally cordial and helpful. The laymen and the pastor ought to seek to make the most of the official visits of the presiding elder. A full Quarterly Conference is always an opportunity. Much more than the routine questions ought to mark its sessions. A prepared program could be arranged which would greatly help the work of the church and increase the Christian influence in the community. The meeting occasionally of the mass of the membership socially would produce good results. Special meetings might be held of the Sunday school workers, or the Epworth League, or the missionary societies, or the temperance or other important committees of the Quarterly Conference. These, with the extra service rendered in the revival meetings, would bring the presiding elder in touch with the entire life of the Church.

The work of the presiding elder with the official members, except in the Quarterly Conferences, is accomplished through conversation and consultation.

In making appointments the respect inspired by the character, ability, and record of the presiding elder ought to produce the greatest confidence. In all dealings of the pastor and official members with each other, and of the presiding elder with both, the utmost frankness should prevail. Not that promises should be made and pledges given which in the nature of the case must be contingent, or that every possible alternative should be presented and discussed, but that such free and frank conversation should be had with both the pastor and the church that the presiding elder should be familiar with their wishes and desires, so as to properly represent them, and, where feasible or best, to secure their fulfillment. He should be in such relations to them that he would gladly present the pastors and the representatives of the church at the session of the Annual Conference to the bishop, if they desired, to state their own case. This means faithful, free, and fearless dealing with both pastors and churches, willingness on the part of the presiding elder to take and to bear responsibility, to expect occasional failures and yet yearly reach a higher level of effectiveness on his district. This requires a care as to what promises he makes and a greater care to keep them. There is hardly a place in the Church where a well-meaning weak man can do more harm than in the presiding eldership. The relation of the churches to the presiding elder's work will always vary. Some will prefer to leave all things concerning the appointment to his discretion and the judgment of the bishop and cabinet, expecting him to bear all the responsibility. Others will think best,

Presiding elder
and pastoral
appointments.

and the presiding elder may greatly desire them, to appoint and have present at the Annual Conference a committee with whom, as changing circumstances may alter the situation, consultation may be had. In many cases the appointments can, with due regard to all interests, be practically determined before Conference. This is the case almost always where pastor and people unite in wishing no change. But arranging appointments by pastors and churches without consultation with the presiding elder brings disaster to the interests of the district and the Conference, and not seldom to the Church, and should never be tolerated in Methodism. Regarding all these things there should be a clear understanding at the last Quarterly Conference.

American Methodists, ministers and laymen, can afford to trust each other. Pursuing such a fair, open, and consistent course, the appointments of a district ought to be made with less friction and more satisfaction to pastors and churches each added year of the presiding elder's service. Of course, there will come emergencies—sickness and death will invade; but where the presiding elder and the pastors and the presiding elder and Quarterly Conferences understand and trust each other there will not be found a better system of ministerial appointments than the Methodist itinerancy.

CHAPTER VII.

THE OFFICIAL MEMBERS AND THEIR PERSONAL RELIGIOUS LIFE.

"For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."—1 Cor. iii, 21-23.

INCREASED burdens require increased strength. Added cares and interests demand more entire consecration. The enlargement of the sphere of thought and action must be accompanied by a more profound sense of dependence upon God. The responsibilities of position, influence, and leadership make imperative a more intimate sense of divine communion if our work is to be done in truth and wrought in God.

The fact that the work is church work does not absolve from the application of these principles, but emphasizes them. The work itself does not sanctify. It is the man who must bring a sanctified nature to the work. Hence we conclude, and experience confirms the conclusion, that unless a man has a deeper piety and a closer walk with God after he becomes an official member he will have less than before. He must be a better man or he will be a worse one. Right here many a man makes a lifelong mistake. The work will not help him unless God fits him for the work.

The man who receives this charge from God and seeks the added gifts and grace of the Holy Spirit for the proper discharge of his trust will prove how God can raise up at this day princes in his Israel. The man who does not, will, with the very best intentions, carry the spirit of the world into the direction of the affairs of the Church and betray the cause of our Lord in the house of his friends.

This should not seem a strange doctrine. All are aware that the holy charge of the Christian ministry does not make men holy. Unless they are much better men, as God fits them for their work, they are worse men than when in secular life. So in all work for Christ, the higher service demands the worthier preparation and the mightier inflow of the power of the Spirit. All great revivals begin with the pastor and the official membership. There are churches that have had years of spiritual barrenness because our Lord could not do many mighty works with the official members because of their unbelief. But the great Head of the Church can work wonders with an official membership growing in grace and receptive of the gifts and influence of the Spirit. O that our consecration and reception of the might of the living Christ and his indwelling Spirit were equal to the measure of our responsibilities and opportunities!

What then is the great need of Christian workers, both lay and clerical? Spiritual-mindedness. We must remember that Christ's kingdom is not of this world and cannot be built up by a reliance upon worldly methods. We must keep clear of coveting, or taking, material goods for the Church that, like Gehazi's gift from

Our great need
spiritual-mindedness.

Naaman, bring leprosy with them. We must everywhere exalt and lift up manhood. The Church that is richest in consecrated manhood is wealthiest of all. The aim and methods of a Church must be kept true to her mission in the world. While the tendency of an unconsecrated lay leadership is unconsciously to a lower aim and lax methods, and worldly policy in the direction of the work of the Church, it works the further injury of closing mind and heart to that clearer vision which comes to spiritually-minded men in the use of the opportunities and resources of the Church. God has plan and purpose for each individual Christian society or Church, as for each Christian life. The problem for the Church, as for the individual Christian, is to keep in such harmony with the will of God that we may be conscious of the divine leadership. The great men of the Church whom God has raised up as leaders have lacked many things which give success to schemes of worldly policy or aggrandizement, but they have been men with the spiritual eye clear, the spiritual sense quick and receptive, and so in touch with the divine that they were conscious of the leadership of their anointed Lord. Such were Luther and Knox. Such were Wesley and Chalmers. Such were Asbury and the Methodist fathers. Such are D. L. Moody and General Booth, Bishops Taylor and Thoburn. These men have not lacked common sense, but they have had spiritual sense, which is worth more than the wealth of empires and the patronage of kings.

This quality which is so essential in the work of the Church at large is of the same priceless value in the life and activity of the local church. Sometimes

in parish work we come to the entrance of two paths, when, so far as human judgment can determine, there is little to choose, when only the instinct of a clear spiritual sense, that quality which we call spiritual-mindedness, can rightly guide, or “out of this nettle, Danger, pluck the flower, Safety.”

This alone will give us faith, and without faith it is impossible to please God or to follow our Lord. A spiritually-minded, faithful pastor and official membership will have a church of like mind, and will accomplish the purpose of her Lord.

How shall busy men of business in the world, who to an already burdened mind add the
Prayer.
 cares of the church, secure or retain this
 spiritual mind? As all men do, only by prayer. We have the mind of the Spirit only as we are in communion with God. Prayer has some essentials. One of these is the submission of the whole being,
Submission.
 life, and plans, business, ambitions, and affections, fears and hopes, to an almighty and all-loving heavenly Father, to be thoroughly convinced, and to make it the principle of action that to be in harmony with God is to make life a success. To fail of this, even though we have the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them, is to fail utterly and forever. This will humble the man to walk with God, who does justly and loves mercy.

To this keeping the heart and life pliant under the divine will must be added a deep longing
Longing after God.
 after God, if a man is to be a man of
 prayer. Like the psalmist he must know what it is to have his heart and his flesh cry out “for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before

God?" All God's gifts cannot satisfy the soul that was made for him and will only rest in his presence.

To such submission of life, to such seeking of heart, God, the infinite Father of our spirits, is near. The asking is not far parted from the receiving. If the prayer be very human in its imperfection and weakness the answer in its heavenly refreshing and royal bounty is divine, "above all that we are able to ask or think." Men who have prayed and prevailed are the conquerors in this world. The legions of triumphant angels are not very far from their call. This gives steadfastness of purpose and takes the worry out of Christian work. It gives firmness and fortitude in trial, and sets an open heaven at the gates of death.

The official member should be a careful and diligent student of God's word. Not that he should study it critically, as should a pastor or divinity student; not that he should study it minutely and thoroughly in order to teach, as should a Sunday school teacher; not that he should study it to edify others, as the leader of a social religious meeting, nor even that he should seek daily spiritual instruction, guidance, and help for his own life as a private Christian. He may read and study the Scriptures to any or all these ends. He must know from them what God says to his soul, both as an individual and a member of the family of our Father, the household of faith. But as an official member he is to study diligently the principles of the divine administration. These principles are revealed in the law, in God's dealings with his people, and especially in that great proclamation of political

and social principles made by the prophets of the Old Covenant. He must understand the vital truths of the Gospel upon which is based the divine kingdom upon earth, and be familiar with their application in apostolic life. There is no such training for the leadership of men as the love Christ bore them, the mind he possessed.* The church officer who can read Paul's address to the Ephesian elders (Acts xx) and feel that it reflects his own love and desire to serve the Church has the first qualification for success as an officer in that body of which Christ is the head. The First Epistle of John and the pastoral epistles of Paul are special helps in the work of strengthening and guiding the life of the Church. But we must go back to the fundamental truths of a holy God, the eternal distinction between righteousness and transgression, and must join to it the infinite redemption of Christ for the life of families and communities as well as individuals, before we can be fitted to do the work of God in the service of his Church. This study of the word will cause to blend with a strict integrity and high sense of honor as a Christian a love like that which wept over guilty Jerusalem or so powerfully moved Paul at Cæsarea, a faithfulness, tact, and courtesy like that shown in the apostolic rebukes of wayward Churches with a humility like our Lord's.

To this life of prayer, of careful and devout study of the word of God, must be added direct personal work for the souls of men. Every human soul is a revelation of God. A divine purpose is enwrapped in every human life. To aid in its unfolding must be a joy of angels. This work is committed of Christ to us his followers, the partak-

Personal work
for men.

ers of his redemption. All study and theory pales before the personal contact with a human soul awakened and face to face with the profoundest problems of our being. To lead such a one to a choice, decisive and eternal, of God and righteousness, and see through it open the sublimest joys of the human soul, is no ordinary experience, and brings no ordinary strength and joy to the heart. This true spiritual culture by Christian work, and the help of seeking souls, is a fitness and preparation for the service of the Church and her anointed Lord, which every officer of hers should covet and seek. This keeps us at once in touch with our Lord and with souls he died to save—with the great living problems of living men. Only a vital piety will help us in such work. This will make our Christian life real and our service in the Church a labor of love for Christ's sake.

We have dwelt largely on the responsibilities and obligations of official members. They have also their rewards. To be a member of a Christian Church is an inestimable privilege. Not reckoning the relations into which human salvation brings us with our risen Lord, such membership allies our life and work with the most enduring and potent organization known among men. For its persistence and power it does not depend upon any material force or outward show of conquering might. It has irresistibly attracted men by the purity of its teaching, the nobility of its ideal of human life, the grandeur of its conception of human destiny. However lofty and beautiful its ideal, the practical life and influence of Christianity have so purified and blessed human hearts and homes and communities that it is beyond

Rewards of
service.

all question the pervading element of modern civilization. The conquering march of two thousand years begins, in our day, to take on the aspect of world-wide dominion. With all its defects the noblest memorials of the influence of the living Christ upon individual character and the social life and institutions of men are found in the nineteenth Christian century. There is its beadroll of heroes, martyrs, and saints. Into this society of believers have been gathered the purest, noblest, and worthiest souls for two thousand years, and this society to-day includes the best men and women of the age. The work they are doing is the grandest work committed to human hands. From the cross of Cawnpoor to the graves of the leper missionaries, from the triumphs of Garrison, Phillips, and Lincoln to those apostles of the later reformation, from martyred Haddock down, the leaves of this tree of life are for the healing of the nations.

To be a leader in this work of bringing in the kingdom of God upon earth is no common honor. To live in the same community and bear consistent testimony for a lifetime to the saving power of Christ is no small privilege. To live so that one's word has greater weight and influence with the years is great reward. To see the Lord prosper the work given to your hand, so that his Church is more holy and more helpful—its children trained for Christ; its young men and maidens kept from the snares of the devil, saved of Christ and growing up into him; its entire membership enjoying a vivid and blessed Christian experience; the company of believers united in love and in earnest work to save lost men—this is seeing such fruit of one's labors as few other fields of Christian work

afford. To be in the fellowship, nay, to be a helpful leader, of a prosperous, powerful, and aggressive Christian Church is an honor and reward such as is not easily paralleled among men. To hear the final "Well done, good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," will far outweigh all sacrifices, trials, and vexations of his service in the Church on earth.

PART II.

THE SPECIFIC DUTIES OF OFFICIAL
MEMBERS.

A. MINISTERIAL MEMBERS.

APPOINTED BY THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

SUPERNUMERARIES.

SUPERANNUATES.

B. LAY MEMBERS.

LOCAL PREACHERS—EXHORTERS.

SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS.

PRESIDENTS OF EPWORTH LEAGUE CHAPTERS.

CLASS LEADERS.

STEWARDS.

TRUSTEES.

C. CHURCH COUNCILS.

LEADERS AND STEWARDS' MEETING.

OFFICIAL BOARD.

QUARTERLY CONFERENCE.

DISTRICT CONFERENCE.

LAY ELECTORAL CONFERENCE.

HINTS TO CHURCH OFFICERS.

RULES OF ORDER.

CHAPTER I.

MINISTERIAL MEMBERS.

SUPERNUMERARY MINISTERS.

¶ 190. A supernumerary minister is one who, because of impaired health, is temporarily unable to perform full work. He may receive an appointment or be left without one, according to the judgment of the Annual Conference of which he is a member; but he shall have no claim on the beneficiary funds of the Church except by vote of the Conference; and he shall be subject to all the limitations of the Discipline in respect to reappointment and continuance in the same charge that apply to effective ministers. In case he be left without an appointment he shall have a seat in the Quarterly Conference, and all the privileges of membership, in the place where he may reside. He shall report to the fourth Quarterly Conference and to the pastor all marriages solemnized and all baptisms administered. In case he lives beyond the bounds of his Conference he shall forward annually a certificate similar to that required of a superannuated minister.

SUPERANNUATED MINISTERS.

¶ 191. Every superannuated minister, who may reside without the bounds of the Conference of which he is a member, shall have a seat in the Quarterly Conference, and all the privileges of membership, in the church where he may reside; he shall report to the fourth Quarterly Conference and to the pastor all marriages solemnized and all baptisms administered, and he shall annually forward to his Conference a certificate of his Christian and ministerial conduct, together with an account of the number and circumstances of his family, signed by the presiding elder of the district or the pastor of the charge within whose bounds he may reside; without which the

Conference shall not be required to allow his claim, and may locate him without his consent.—*Discipline*.

The presiding elder, or the elder sent to represent him, or in their absence the pastor, is the president of the Quarterly Conference. The traveling preachers who are members of it are the pastor and any brethren who are appointed to educational work, chaplaincies, or the press, and all supernumerary or superannuated preachers residing within the bounds of the charge, or who have their memberships in the Quarterly Conference by appointment of the Annual Conference. The supernumerary and superannuated preachers and their brethren without pastoral charge ought to add strength to any Quarterly Conference.

The supernumerary preachers are generally engaged in business. Their temptation is to become secularized. Happy the case when such preachers, if they be prospered, retain the self-denial and liberality of early pastoral days; harmful beyond measure if the community have the impression that the clerical title and Conference connection is retained solely for business advantages and the call to the Gospel ministry is degraded to increasing the gains of secular life.

The experience and wisdom of the superannuate ought to give weight to his counsel. No man more eloquently pleads for Christ and the Christian life than the minister worn with labors and with years, who has learned the secret of growing old gracefully, whose soul has been chastened and whose disposition has been sweetened by lifelong communion with his Lord. These men, not only for

their past but for the present, in closing serenely a well-spent life are the priceless heritage of the Church. The clerical element in the Quarterly Conference should keep aloof from all partisanship and strifes of opinion. As a rule the work belongs to others. It should be theirs to give wise counsels in deliberations and burning inspiration to the work of the official board and the Quarterly Conference. They are so raised above the petty details of ministerial service that they can emphasize the great and momentous interests for which the Church stands and which must control its work. Happy is the church whose clerical helpers among its official membership forget to censure or to point out defects, but who can be counted upon for judicious and impartial counsel, and for an enthusiasm in Christian service whose infinite variety of soul-absorbing passion age cannot wither nor time render stale.

CHAPTER II.

LOCAL PREACHERS AND EXHORTERS.

LOCAL PREACHERS.

¶ 192. Wherever a District Conference exists, the powers hereinafter conferred on Quarterly Conferences in relation to local preachers and exhorters shall be exercised only by the District Conference; but it shall not license any person to preach, nor renew the license of any person to preach or exhort, nor recommend any local preacher to the Annual Conference for orders or for recognition of orders, or for reception on trial, without the previous recommendation of the Quarterly Conference, or of the leaders and stewards' meeting of the charge of which he is a member.

¶ 193. The Quarterly Conference, where no District Conference exists, shall have authority—

1. To license proper persons to preach; *provided*, they shall have been previously recommended by the society of which they are members, or by the leaders and stewards' meeting; shall have passed a satisfactory examination in the studies prescribed for candidates for license to preach; and shall also have been examined in the presence of the Conference on the subject of doctrine and discipline. And no member of the Church shall be at liberty to preach without such a license.

2. To examine local preachers in the course of study prescribed for them; to inquire into the gifts, labors, and usefulness of each by name; to inquire if they will wholly abstain from the use of tobacco; and to renew their licenses annually, when, in the judgment of the Conference, their gifts, grace, and usefulness, and their faithfulness and proficiency in study, warrant such renewal.

3. To recommend to the Annual Conference local preachers who are suitable candidates for deacons' or elders' orders

(¶¶ 162, 165), for recognition of orders (¶ 153), or for reception on trial (¶ 146), such candidates having been previously examined in the presence of the Quarterly Conference on the subject of doctrine and discipline.

4. To try, suspend, deprive of ministerial office and credentials, expel, or acquit any local preacher of the circuit or station against whom charges shall have been preferred.

NOTE.—For the licensing, amenability, and appeal of local preachers in missions in the United States and Territories, see ¶ 342.

¶ 194, § 1. Every local preacher, ordained or unordained, not having a pastoral charge, shall be a member of, and amenable to, the Quarterly Conference where he resides.

§ 2. But if he has a pastoral charge his Quarterly Conference membership shall be in that charge.

§ 3. Whenever a preacher is located or discontinued by an Annual Conference he shall thereupon hold his Quarterly Conference membership where he resides at the time of location or discontinuance.

§ 4. When a local preacher shall change his residence he shall procure from the pastor of the charge from which he removes, or from the presiding elder of the district, a certificate of his official standing and of dismissal, and shall present it to the pastor of the charge to which he removes. If he neglects to do this he shall not be recognized nor use his office as a local preacher in the charge to which he has removed; and he shall continue to be amenable to the Quarterly Conference of the charge from which he has removed, which may, if the neglect be long continued, after due notice, try him for persistent disobedience to the order of the Church, and upon conviction thereof deprive him of ministerial office and credentials.

¶ 195. The presiding elders and the preachers in charge are required so to arrange the appointments, wherever it is practicable, as to give the local preachers regular and systematic employment on the Sabbath.

¶ 196. Every local preacher shall be enrolled in a class, and meet with it. He shall make to the District or Quarterly Conference a report of his labors, as follows: 1. Number of sermons preached; 2. Number of prayer meetings attended; 3. Number of class meetings attended; 4. Number of Sunday

schools attended; 5. Marriages solemnized, with the names of the persons married, and baptisms administered, with the name and ages of the persons baptized, that due entry may be made by the pastor in the church records; 6. Number of funerals conducted; 7. Miscellaneous items. If a local preacher be found neglectful of any of the above duties, or unacceptable in his ministerial office, the Quarterly Conference may, after due trial, deprive him of his ministerial office.

¶ 197. Whenever a local preacher fills the place of a traveling preacher, with the approbation of the presiding elder, he shall be paid for his time a sum proportional to the allowance of a traveling preacher, which sum shall be paid by the charge at the next Quarterly Meeting, if the traveling preacher whose place he filled up were either sick or necessarily absent; or, in other cases, out of the allowance of the traveling preacher.

¶ 198. If a local preacher be distressed in his temporal circumstances on account of his service in the charge he may apply to the Quarterly Conference, who may give him what relief is judged proper, after the allowance of the traveling preachers and their families, and all other regular allowances, are discharged.

EXHORTERS.

¶ 199. An exhorter shall be constituted by the recommendation of the class of which he is a member, or of the leaders and stewards' meeting of the charge, and a license signed by the pastor.

¶ 200. The duties of exhorters are, to hold meetings for prayer and exhortation wherever opportunity is afforded, subject to the direction of the pastor; to attend all the sessions of the District and Quarterly Conferences, and to present a written report to the same. He shall be subject to an annual examination of character in the Quarterly Conference, and a renewal of license, to be signed by the president thereof.—*Discipline.*

“Every local preacher, ordained or unordained, not having a pastoral charge, shall be a member of, and amenable to, the Quarterly Conference where he

resides. But if he has a pastoral charge his Quarterly Conference membership shall be in that charge." This provision of the Discipline puts the fourteen thousand local preachers in the Quarterly Conferences of the Church.

Local preachers in our economy are of three classes : First, those who have been members of the traveling connection, but who for any cause have found it necessary to relinquish that work.

Former traveling preachers.

All honor to such men who show by life and example that they serve Christ as lovingly and as earnestly now, in the ranks, as when leading the charge.

Secondly, the young men who are preparing for the regular work of the pastorate and ministry. These young men are per-

Young men preparing for the ministry.

suing their studies, doing what Christian and ministerial work they can, acting under the authority of the Church as licentiates or local preachers in orders. Such young men are the

Preachers in local work.

hope of the ministry and the Church. Third, those who expect to pursue secular avocations during the week but preach and hold meetings for religious services on Sunday. This last class were the original local preachers.

They still do a vast amount of work among our Wesleyan brethren in England and in the Methodist Church in Canada. - Our conditions are much different, but our needs are not less. There is no doubt but for every traveling preacher we have equal need for a local preacher at work every Sunday. To say nothing of such as are in regular evangelistic work, the neglected neighborhoods, the ungodly thousands in sight of our church doors, are a standing invi-

tation and demand for a consecrated and trained local ministry. In the country we need local ministers who will be willing to leave the home church and go three or five miles, organize and carry on a Sunday school, sustain, if necessary, a week night cottage prayer meeting, preach plain, practical, helpful Gospel sermons which shall be beyond criticism in rhetoric or grammar. In cities there are opportunities even more abundant. God and the Church must call men for this work, they must be trained for it, delight in it, and be honored by it. In the Quarterly Conference these men will have the weight and influence their character and work command. Besides these regularly authorized lay preachers we ought to feel at liberty to employ as lay workers men and women without license who have any special gift of instruction, or exhortation, or training, or experience which would be helpful to the congregation. If Mr. Gladstone or Professor Richard T. Ely can speak acceptably in Episcopal congregations why should not Methodism utilize her resources among her strong unlicensed laymen?

Exhorters are members of the Quarterly Conference.

Exhorters. These brethren are authorized to hold meetings and to address congregations by exhortation. Many thus addressed have been led to begin a religious life. This is often and should generally be the first step to the local ministry. Men to whom we would hesitate to give a license as local preachers on account of inexperience may be safely employed as exhorters.

CHAPTER III.

SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS.

¶ 329. For the moral and religious instruction of our children, and for the promotion of Bible knowledge among all our people:

§ 1. Every Sunday school of the Methodist Episcopal Church shall be under the supervision of a Sunday school board, and shall be auxiliary to the Sunday School Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

§ 2. The Sunday school board shall consist of the pastor, who shall be *ex officio* chairman, the Sunday school committee appointed by the Quarterly Conference, the superintendent, the assistant superintendents, the secretaries, the treasurer, the librarians, and the teachers of the school.

§ 3. The superintendent shall be nominated annually by the Sunday school board, and confirmed by the Quarterly Conference at its next session after such nomination; and in case of a vacancy the pastor shall superintend or secure the superintending of the school until such time as the superintendent, nominated by the Sunday school board shall be confirmed by the Quarterly Conference.

§ 4. The other officers of the school shall be elected by the Sunday school board.

§ 5. The teachers of the school shall be nominated by the superintendent, with the concurrence of the pastor, and elected by the board.

§ 6. In case of the withdrawal of officers or teachers from the school they cease to be members of the board; and the place of any officer or teacher habitually neglecting his or her duty, or being guilty of improper conduct, may be declared vacant by a vote of two thirds of the board present at any regular or special meeting.

§ 7. It shall be the duty of the Sunday school board, whenever practicable, to organize our schools into temperance societies, under such rules and regulations as the board may prescribe, the duty of which societies shall be to see that temperance instruction is imparted to the school, and secure, so far as possible, the pledging of its members to total abstinence.

¶ 330. It shall be the duty of the presiding elder to bring the subject of Sunday schools before the last Quarterly Conference of each year; and said Quarterly Conference shall appoint a committee of members of our Church of not less than three nor more than nine for each Sunday school in the charge, to be called the Committee on Sunday schools, whose duty it shall be to aid the pastor and the officers of the Sunday schools in procuring suitable teachers, in promoting in all proper ways the attendance of children and adults on our Sunday schools and at our regular public worship, and in raising money to meet the expenses of the Sunday schools of the charge. Of the committee the pastor shall be chairman.

¶ 331. It shall be the duty of the pastor, aided by the superintendent and the Committee on Sunday schools, to decide as to what books and other publications shall be used in the Sunday schools.

¶ 332. It shall be the special duty of the pastor, with the aid of the other preachers and the Committee on Sunday schools, to form Sunday schools in all our congregations where ten persons can be collected for that purpose, which schools shall be auxiliary to the Sunday School Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church; to engage the cooperation of as many of our members as they can; to visit the schools as often as practicable; to preach on the subject of Sunday schools and the religious instruction of children in each congregation at least once in six months; to form classes, wherever they can, for the instruction of the larger children, youth, and adults, in the word of God; and where they cannot superintend them personally, to see that suitable teachers are provided for that purpose.

¶ 333. It shall be the duty of our ministers to enforce faithfully upon parents and Sunday school teachers the great im-

portance of instructing children in the doctrines and duties of our holy religion; to see that our Catechisms be used as extensively as possible in our Sunday schools and families; and to preach to the children, and catechise them publicly in the Sunday schools and at public meetings appointed for that purpose.

¶ 334. It shall be the duty of every minister in his pastoral visits to pay special attention to the children; to speak to them personally and kindly on the subject of experimental and practical godliness, according to their capacity; to pray earnestly for them; and diligently instruct and exhort all parents to dedicate their children to the Lord in baptism as early as convenient.

¶ 335. Each pastor shall lay before the Quarterly Conference, to be entered on its journal, the number, state, and average attendance of the Sunday schools in his charge, and the extent to which he has preached to the children and catechised them, and shall make the required report on Sunday schools to his Annual Conference.—*Discipline*.

Two and a half million Sunday school scholars in the Methodist Episcopal Church, five million in American Methodism, twenty million or more in this country; Sunday schools the world over in all Protestant and many Roman Catholic Churches—these are the facts with which we have to deal. This is the most universal form of religious instruction the world has seen. The Bible is the text-book, studied as no other book ever in the hands of men has been. The school, which at first was confined to little children and boys and girls, now becomes more and more the school of the church and congregation, proving the increasing hold the truth of the divine revelation has upon the adult life, the best-trained minds of the most intelligent generation which has ever lived. The fitness of the

Characteristics
of the Sunday
school.

training for young life is so recognized that, however indifferent men may be about religion themselves, few men are to be found who do not wish their children trained in some Sunday school. The mere statement of these facts is a complete refutation of the majority of the objections used by infidel writers and lecturers against the Bible.

This training in the knowledge of God's word, and
 Opportunity its application to the life and conduct of
 and resources. the children and youth of the church and
 the majority of the congregation, is one of the gravest responsibilities of the Christian Church. It would be difficult to overstate the opportunity. Nor can the sum of the resources employed seem otherwise than immense. The hundreds of thousands of teachers, including men and women of the highest intelligence and character in the land; the costly buildings; the vast circulation of the Holy Scriptures, varying in price from a five-cent Testament to a fifteen-dollar Teacher's Bible; the learning, enterprise, and money expended upon the various lesson leaves and teachers' helps; the Sunday school periodical press, from the *Sunday School Times* and teachers' journals to the various children's papers, enormous in the aggregate; the Sunday school libraries with thousands of volumes added every year—these are some of the resources. Indeed, without more than one generation of Sunday school training Chautauqua circles and young people's societies would never have come into being.

With all these resources the trouble with many Sunday schools as assemblies for Bible study is that there is no study and but little Bible. We need to

pay attention to quality as well as quantity. All that first-class teachers' meetings and normal quality of the classes can do is needed to carry on a work. progressive, thorough, and soul-training study of the word of God. This we must do, but this will take the best brain and heart of the Church.

The pastor has oversight of this work. It is also under the control of the Quarterly Confer- The superin- ence. But the pastor and the Quarterly tendent. Conference commit the direction of the work of the Sunday school to the superintendent. He is nominated by the Sunday school board and confirmed by the Quarterly Conference. He has charge of the school. His most important duty is the choice and training of suitable teachers for this work. This requires judgment, tact, and power to work with and through others. The teachers' meeting is indispensable to a well-ordered school. If the pastor, as is generally desirable, be the teacher of the teachers, the superintendent should be always present. All possible detail work should be arranged so that as little time as possible should be taken for this work on the Lord's day. The superintendent must know children and love them. The grading and assigning of scholars to classes requires a quick eye, sound judgment, and a sympathetic heart.

The superintendent must work in harmony with the pastor. Together they nominate the Atmosphere of teachers. The pastor is the chairman of the school. the Sunday school board. Ill success betides the school where these two chief officers are not in closest harmony. There is an atmosphere to every Sunday school. It may be of order, of fellowship, of

benevolence, of devout study of the word ; it may come from many causes, but the man responsible for its being the powerful and molding spiritual influence on the young life gathered before him each week is the superintendent. If he be a man of character, of influence, of devout piety, apt to teach, delighting in the workers and the work, the tone of the school will reveal what manner of man the superintendent is. May God raise up in all our churches holy men, loving Christ and his children, called of God, and especially fitted for the work ! The Church for generations to come will bear the impress of their character and work.

CHAPTER IV.

PRESIDENTS OF EPWORTH LEAGUE CHAPTERS.

¶ 325. For the purpose of promoting intelligent and vital piety among the young people of our churches and congregations, and of training them in works of mercy and help, there shall be an organization under the authority of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church and governed by the following constitution :

I. CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLE 1. *Name*.—The title of this organization shall be “The Epworth League of the Methodist Episcopal Church.”

ARTICLE 2. *Object*.—The object of the League is to promote intelligent and vital piety in the young members and friends of the Church, to aid them in the attainment of purity of heart and constant growth in grace, and to train them in works of mercy and help.

ARTICLE 3. *Organization*.—With a view to carry out the objects of the League the chapters, and such other young people's societies as may be approved by the Quarterly Conferences, shall be organized into Presiding Elders' District Leagues, and may also be formed into General Conference District Leagues. Other groupings may be arranged for the advantage of the work, such as Annual Conference Leagues, State Leagues, City Leagues, etc. The chapter shall be under the control of the Quarterly Conference and the pastor. Any young people's society may become an affiliated chapter of the Epworth League; *provided*, it adopt the aims of the League, that its president and officers and general plans of work be approved by the pastor and official board or Quarterly Conference, and that it be enrolled at the central office.*

*It is not hereby intended to disturb the present status of other young people's societies now organized in the Methodist Episcopal Church which are under control of the pastor and Quarterly Conference.

ARTICLE 4. *Government.*—The management of the League shall be vested in the Board of Control, to consist (1) of fifteen members appointed by the bishops, one of whom shall be a bishop, who shall be President of the Epworth League and of the Board of Control; (2) and of one member from each General Conference district to be chosen as the organization in each General Conference district may decide. This Board of Control shall meet twice in each quadrennium. When the Board of Control holds its first meeting in the quadrennium, should any General Conference district be without representation by failure to elect, the board may elect some one from the district to represent it.

ARTICLE 5. *Officers.*—The officers of the League shall be a president, four vice presidents—two of whom at least shall be laymen—a general secretary, and a treasurer, who shall constitute the General League Cabinet, of which the editor of the *Epworth Herald* and the German assistant secretary shall be members *ex officio*. The president shall be chosen as hereinbefore provided. The vice presidents shall be chosen by the Board of Control from their own members. The general secretary shall be elected by the Board of Control, and shall be the executive officer of the League. He shall have charge of all correspondence and shall keep the records of the League. He shall also be editor of Epworth League publications other than the *Epworth Herald*. The treasurer shall be elected by the Board of Control. The editor of the *Epworth Herald* shall be elected by the General Conference. All these officers shall be elected quadrennially, and shall hold office until their successors are chosen. The duties of the general secretary and the editor of the *Epworth Herald* shall be performed under the direction of the Board of Control; and the Cabinet shall act for the Board of Control *ad interim*. Vacancies in any of the above named positions except the presidency and the editorship of the *Herald* shall be filled by the Cabinet, subject to the approval of the Board of Control.

ARTICLE 6. *German Assistant Secretary.*—The editor of the *Haus und Herd* is constituted the German assistant secretary of the Epworth League, and thereby a member of the General League Cabinet.

ARTICLE 7. *Finances*.—The salaries of the editor of the *Epworth Herald* and of the general secretary shall be fixed by the Book Committee. All other expenses of the Board of Control shall be met through means which it shall devise. No collection shall be taken by the Epworth League of the Methodist Episcopal Church except for League purposes.

ARTICLE 8. *Central Office*.—The central office of the Epworth League shall be in Chicago, Ill.

ARTICLE 9. *Local Constitution*.—The constitution for local chapters shall be in charge of the Board of Control; *provided*, however, that no enactment shall be made which shall in any manner conflict with this general constitution.

ARTICLE 10. *By-Laws*.—The Board of Control shall have power to enact such by-laws for its own government as will not conflict with this constitution.

ARTICLE 11. *Amendments*.—This constitution shall be altered or amended only by the General Conference.

II. DUTIES OF PRESIDING ELDERS AND PASTORS.

¶ 326. It shall be the duty of the presiding elders when holding District or Quarterly Conferences to inquire into the condition of Epworth League chapters and such other young people's societies as may be under the control of the Quarterly and District Conferences, and to ascertain whether they are conducting their affairs in harmony with the purpose and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

¶ 327. It shall be the duty of pastors to organize, if possible, and to maintain, if practicable, chapters of the Epworth League.

¶ 328. The president of an Epworth League chapter must be a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and shall be elected by the chapter and confirmed by the Quarterly Conference, of which body he shall then become a member. It shall be his duty to present to the Quarterly Conference a report of his chapter, together with such other information as the Conference may require and he may be able to give.—*Discipline*.

THE EPWORTH LEAGUE.

The Epworth League movement is the greatest in numerical strength and in possibilities of any form of

church organization which has been adopted by Methodism since the rise of the Sunday school. Its place and development have been quite as providential. There was need of church training of the children of the Church before the founding of the Sunday school. Equally was there need of some form of church life and work which would fill the gap between the Sunday school and the Church. This, in God's providence, has come and is fraught with blessings equal to those brought by the Sunday school.

The chapter in the Discipline upon the Epworth League is confined mainly to the work of the local chapters is left to be developed by the Board of Control or the circumstances of the case as they affect the chapters and its officers. Perhaps this freedom of action is the wisest course with such a rapidly developing movement.

A few points are suggested in regard to the presidents of Epworth League chapters.

They should be men and women who believe that the great mission of the Epworth League is soul winning and soul culture. Just as far as this movement awakens and satisfies a spiritual need in the lives of the young people will it become one of the permanent and controlling forces of the Christian Church. Young people develop rapidly physically and intellectually; they need and crave a spiritual development that shall bring them into vital personal communion with God, and shall both control conduct and mold character. The chapter which works steadily to this end will live and prosper. The

prayer meeting of the League is the key to its success. If that is inspiring, vigorous, and fruitful the League will gain in numbers and in influence.

The Epworth League president ought to believe in the pledge. The Methodists are a pledged people. The early class meeting was made up of pledged attendants. The young people's societies in all the Churches are but modifications of that movement. If the League represents a spiritual life, power, and work for which they may gladly pledge themselves, their time, and their co-operation, then it will attract young people and hold them. If it represents only the social, charitable, and literary side of their united effort, if it has no uplift of inspiration that leads to joyous self-denial and sacrifice, it will last while it pleases and until some novelty more fresh and striking appears. In the work of the Epworth League the cross must be the center and the living motor force which gives order and power to the whole.

The League should supply intellectual stimulus and training. It should be in closest sympathy with our schools of every grade. The chapters should know the work of these schools and aid in it. They should be recruiting stations for students. More than this; the League should help the intellectual life of those who cannot attend the schools and of those whose school days are over.

The Department of Mercy and Help will always secure interest and cooperation. It cannot fail to do good in any community in blessing those who give and those who receive. It shows the spirit of Christ manifest in the world these

Belief in the
pledge.

Intellectual
work.

Mercy and
help.

nineteen hundred years after his ministry in the flesh has ended.

The Department of Entertainment or Social Life requires all the grace, gifts, tact, and consecrated ability of every sort possessed by the president, his cabinet, and the whole chapter. No more important work is before the young consecrated life of our Church than the bringing in of a Christian social order into the life they live and the Church they love. May all good men and women aid therein, and may there be granted the blessing and guidance of Almighty God!

CHAPTER V.

CLASS LEADERS.

Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.—Mal. iii, 16, 17.

CLASSES AND CLASS MEETINGS.

¶ 50. The design of the organization of classes and the appointment of leaders is,

§ 1. To establish a system of pastoral oversight that shall effectively reach every member of the church.

§ 2. To establish and keep up a meeting for social and religious worship, for instruction, encouragement, and admonition, that shall be a profitable means of grace to our people.

§ 3. To carry out, unless other measures be adopted, a financial plan for the raising of moneys.

¶ 51. The primary object of distributing the members of the church into classes is to secure the subpastoral oversight made necessary by our itinerant economy. In order to secure this oversight,

§ 1. Let the classes, wherever practicable, be composed of not more than twenty persons, and let the leader report at each Quarterly Conference the condition of his class, as follows:

1. Number of members in his class.
2. Number of probationers.
3. Average attendance.
4. Number habitually absent.
5. Number of class meetings held.
6. Number who contribute to the support of the church.
7. Number of visits made.
8. Number of heads of families in the class, and how many of them observe family worship.

9. Number of church papers taken by class members.

10. Miscellaneous matters.

§ 2. Let each leader be careful to inquire how every member of his class prospers; not only how each person outwardly observes the rules, but how he grows in the knowledge and love of God.

§ 3. Let the leaders converse with their pastors frequently and freely.

¶ 52. In order to render our class meetings interesting and profitable let the preacher in charge, 1. Remove improper leaders. 2. See that all the leaders be of sound judgment and truly devoted to God.

¶ 53. In the arrangement of class meetings two or more classes may meet together, and be conducted according to such plan as shall be agreed upon by the leaders in concurrence with the preacher in charge.

¶ 54. Let care be observed that they do not fall into formality through the use of a uniform method. Let speaking be voluntary or the exercises conversational, the leader taking such measures as may best assist in making the services fresh, spiritual, and of permanent religious profit.

¶ 55. Let the leaders be directed to such a course of reading and study as shall best qualify them for their work; especially let such books be recommended as will tend to increase their knowledge of the Scriptures and make them familiar with those passages best adapted to Christian edification. Whenever practicable let the preachers examine the leaders in the studies recommended.—*Discipline*.

CLASS LEADERS.

“The design of the organization of classes and the appointment of leaders is to establish a system of pastoral oversight that shall effectively reach every member of the church.”

So far as human agencies are concerned, next to the faithful and effective preaching of the Gospel, Methodism owes its success to the class meeting. This lay

pastoral supervision and oversight alone rendered permanent the work of the itinerant on his four or six weeks' circuit. No other class of adherents needed pastoral sympathy and admonition more than the converts of the first fifty years of American Methodism. That Church afforded them the best method of spiritual culture yet devised for the keeping and training of converts. Inspiring was the response of the mass of the membership to this means of grace. The strong and influential men and women of Methodism were trained in the early class meetings. Our distinctive type of piety and religious experience was developed and fixed in the class meeting.

The need of lay pastoral oversight in the greatly increased number of our churches, families, and members is more urgent to-day than when Asbury and Lee laid the foundations of our work in America. It is true that in a large portion of our Church the circuit preacher has given way to the settled pastor; the infrequent visits of the itinerant in charge to the pastor dwelling among the people to whom he preaches; the former known to the majority of the church only as the presiding elder is now, the latter known to every member of the congregation and child in the Sunday school; the one preaching daily and rarely twice successively in the same place, the other giving his whole time to the need and work of a single congregation. Yet the pastor will never be able to do all the work required for "such pastoral oversight as shall effectively reach every member of the church," because of our increasing memberships. Where we have scores we can and ought to have

hundreds in all our communities and cities. Our Sunday schools can be so organized that we in conjunction with other Protestant Churches, excluding the Roman Catholic population, can so reach the children of the community that those not in our schools shall be the rare exceptions. Protestantism, through its Sunday schools, properly organized and directed, can reach the great mass of the children of the community. Through its young people's societies it can hold the great mass of those thus reached. In this work Methodism must lead. With this increase of members comes the increased need for that personal knowledge and sympathy which only pastoral oversight can supply. People do not desire so much to know abstract truth, even religious truth, that they may know what to believe, what rule to obey, what work to accomplish, as to know truth incarnated in a life, and that life personal, loving, and helpful. If the preacher's message be ever so true, and have no help in it for men, they will not hear it. If it be the most powerful and conclusive presentation of the facts of human life and destiny, if there be no personal sympathy in it which reaches the hearts of men, it will never win them. Men are won to Christ not by learning, or eloquence, or wit, but by the love of Christ constraining them through his word, its ministers, and his followers. The present answer to the present pressing needs of men is the salvation which they seek. The increasing demand from every quarter is for loving, sympathetic, faithful pastoral work. The rich will never be brought into any helpful relation to the work of the Church, nor the workmen into fellowship with the Gospel or the Church

founded to proclaim it, except by the most faithful and diligent pastoral care.

This cannot be done alone by the pastor of the church. Physical limitations forbid. Not the numbers only, the increased desire for the truth of the Gospel, the life of the kingdom of God, has wonderfully increased the social life of the Church. This means an im-

Work the pastor cannot perform.

mense increase in the number of agencies employed and the demands made upon the pastor's time. Not simply the number of societies and committees which he is expected to meet, but the care for the objects they attempt to accomplish, and the preparation for his part in them and their oversight, take nearly all the pastor's evenings and a good share of his working hours, besides all his work as a preacher. He cannot do more; but more must be done. It seems as if the future progress and permanent growth of Methodism depend very much upon a revived and efficient system of lay pastoral supervision. How shall this be accomplished? Not as in the past. The Sunday school and Epworth League forbid that. It cannot be again the class meeting and the lay pastoral supervision; it must be the lay supervision and then the class meeting. This was Wesley's original design.

How shall we accomplish this reform of our class meeting system? By our choice of leaders. This is the pastor's prerogative.

He should choose his assistants in the work of the pastorate. These should be men of to-day, not yesterday, those knowing how men and women in active life to-day resist the devil and submit themselves to the mighty God. They must

Kind of leaders demanded.

be men of large and deep sympathy with all suffering and sin-stricken souls. No amount of uprightness and conscientiousness joined to a fault-finding and censorious spirit will make a good class leader. He must have a pastor's love for them, a care to know their life, to feel their sorrows, and to ease their burdens. The genuine piety which commends them and their office must be such as shall be able to deal practically and helpfully with the difficulties of human life. Spiritual insight and soundness of judgment are requisites, self-denial and consistent example are essentials. This work can be done only as it is systematically arranged and planned. In many cases the class will have to be arranged by streets and in such relation to the residences of the leader that he, perhaps an active business man, may be able also to attend to this work. The class leader thus equipped and trained in a daily increasing knowledge of God, his word, and human life is the permanent pastor of Methodism.

Such a man, abiding in close and helpful fellowship with the life of men and women, and the changing circumstances of families, has an influence and power to guide, to persuade, to comfort, and to bless that can seldom come through other forms of Christian service.

The second purpose of the class organization is the meeting for social religious worship as a
Class meetings. means of grace. The subpastor may be, but is not necessarily, the leader of the class meeting. The religious service where each one or most of those present bear testimony to a personal assurance of salvation, a victory over temptation and sin, and a joyous communion with our triumphant Lord will

always attract men and women. The sin which these testify as overcome is universal, abounding. The grace which gives victory may reach as far as sin has done, and is much more abounding. As long as men and women have hearts and consciences they will be drawn to such religious services. The rise of the Society of Christian Endeavor, the Epworth League, and the Young People's Movement, which is but the class meeting revived, proves the universal and permanent interest of Christian experience and Christian testimony. Under whatever modifications necessary, we never needed the class meeting more—that is, some means by which every member of the Church may be reached in the recital of his Christian experience and the expression of his Christian testimony—than now. The prejudice against this form of religious worship has largely died out. All evangelical Churches recognize the fact that it is the most practical, helpful, and beneficial social means of grace in the Church for the upbuilding of believers and the training of those recently converted.

There are some essentials for a successful class meeting. It should be praiseful. The leader may not be able to sing, but some one should be always present who can. The class meeting which does not bring us into an atmosphere of worship and in accord with the life of heaven is a failure. It must always emphasize the fact that

Essentials—
praiseful.

“One army of the living God, to his command we bow:
Part of the host have crossed the flood, and part are crossing now.”

The class meeting that does not make us realize that heaven is not only nearer to us in time, but that

we are nearer to it in spirit, does not accomplish its purpose. The singing will be sympathetic with all trial, suffering, sorrow, and repentant sin, but there will also always be in it the triumphant shout of those who overcome, the victor's song, the joy of the more abundant life. The prayers will be direct, definite, and for present needs, and full of the faith that brings the triumph nigh.

The testimonies will be not only the utterance of the common hope and love, but the relation of individual experience of trial, temptation, and the joys of "walking in newness of life" and working with God. One great element of power of the old class meeting and of the present young people's movement is that this service is universal; all are invited, expected, to take some part in it. The class meeting is not specially for meditation; but few services more often arouse to needed and thorough self-examination. This gives that note of reality to the whole service whose absence is so painfully felt where there is lacking the common touch of common grace to common need. This indeed gives communion.

But the class meeting is more than a fellowship meeting. Led by a wise pastor, or layman, or woman of experience, it is unsurpassed as a meeting for practical religious instruction. This used to be done almost altogether by direct personal response. This, when fittingly done, not in general terms or indiscriminately, is of great help. Often a wise leader will reserve all response until all have spoken, and then note the phases of experience or Christian life which call for admonition or direc-

tion. Perhaps few exercises of the class are more helpful than the practical and devotional study of appropriate chapters or books of the Holy Scriptures. Under wise and competent leadership there is no better means of religious instruction known to the Christian Church than this study in an atmosphere of praise, of consecration, and of victory. The dangers of the class meeting have been shown in the one hundred and fifty years of its history.

Dangers.

1. *Lack of prayer.* Only a prayerful life can be a spiritual life. God's Spirit is given only in answer to prayer. Only God's Spirit can illuminate the conscience, direct the life, and give a new and fresh experience of the things of God.

2. *Lack of thought.* Thought given to the things of God; the promises of God, the experience of the soul. The thinking on the things commended in Phil. iv, 8, is needed.

3. *Lack of rigid honesty with God and with our own souls.* Transparent sincerity in our expressions of the inward life. Not that we can or ought to express all we feel, but let what we do say be a true transcript of what is recorded in our hearts. The things which kill the class meeting are old testimonies, old responses, the same endless monotony which would drive a man spiritually alive to despair.

The freshness of a vital Christian experience of daily inward renewing, the heart-to-heart touch with the great tragic facts of our life, the daily seeking for the larger, purer, more blessed knowledge of God—these make the class meeting a means of perennial inspiration and help.

CHAPTER VI.

STEWARDS.

“Provide things honest in the sight of all men.”—Rom. xii, 17.

“Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him.”—1 Cor. xvi, 2.

STEWARDS.

¶ 268. There shall be not less than three nor more than thirteen stewards in each circuit or station, one of whom shall, after each annual election, be appointed by the Quarterly Conference a recording steward, and one a district steward. But when two or more charges are united the stewards shall hold office till the first Quarterly Conference shall elect a new board.

¶ 269. Let the stewards be persons of solid piety, who both know and love Methodist doctrine and discipline, and who are of good natural and acquired abilities to transact the temporal business of the church.

¶ 270. The pastor shall have the right to nominate the stewards, but the Quarterly Conference shall confirm or reject such nomination. The stewards elected at the fourth Quarterly Conference shall enter upon the discharge of their duties on the adjournment of the next Annual Conference, and shall hold office for one year, or until their successors are elected.

¶ 271. The duties of stewards are: To take an exact account of all the money or other resources received for the support of the ministers in the charge, and to apply the same as the Discipline directs; to make an accurate return of every expenditure of money, whether for the ministers or the poor members of the church; to seek the needy and distressed in order to relieve and comfort them; to inform the ministers of any sick or disorderly persons; to tell the ministers what they

think wrong in them; to attend the quarterly meetings of the charge, and the leaders and stewards' meetings; to give advice, if asked, in planning the circuit; to attend committees for the application of money to churches; to give counsel in matters of arbitration; to provide the elements for the Lord's Supper; to write circular letters to the societies in the circuit, exhorting them to greater liberality, if need be; and also to let them know, when occasion requires, the state of the temporal concerns of the charge.

¶ 272. The duties of the district stewards are: To attend the annual district stewards' meeting when called by the presiding elder, and to perform the duties specified in ¶ 282.

¶ 273. Stewards are accountable for the faithful performance of their duties to the Quarterly Conference of the circuit or station, which shall have power to dismiss or change them at pleasure.

STEWARDS AND THE SUPPORT OF MINISTERS.

¶ 274. The more effectually to raise the amount necessary to meet the estimates made for the support of effective ministers, let the stewards at the beginning of the year estimate the amount needed monthly. Then ascertain from each member of the church, and, as far as practicable, from each attendant of the congregation, what each will give as his monthly contribution.

¶ 275. Let these sums be entered by the recording steward in a book which he shall keep as treasurer of the board of stewards. If the total amount of these sums does not equal the amount needed monthly, then let the stewards apportion the deficiency among all such as are willing, voluntarily, to assume such deficiency, setting down to each person, with his consent, the additional amount which they think he ought monthly to pay.

¶ 276. Let the stewards then adopt and carry out a plan by which every one, except such as prefer to make weekly contributions through their class leaders, shall have the opportunity of regularly contributing each month, or oftener, not grudgingly nor of necessity, the sum which has been pledged by him. Let these contributions be paid over regularly to the

recording steward or class leader, and be brought up by him to the leaders and stewards' meeting or Quarterly Conference, as the case may be; and let the stewards report to the first Quarterly Conference of each year the details of the financial plan. Also, to each subsequent Quarterly Conference whether the plan, together with the further directions contained in this chapter, have been faithfully carried out. The recording steward shall keep an individual account of all these pledges and contributions, and shall pay over the moneys collected, under the direction of the stewards, to the ministers authorized to receive them.

SUPPORT OF PRESIDING ELDERS.

¶ 282. There shall be annually, in every district, a meeting composed of one steward from each charge, to be selected by the Quarterly Conference, whose duty it shall be, with the advice of the presiding elder, who shall preside in such meeting, to make an estimate of the amount necessary to furnish a comfortable support to the presiding elder, and to apportion the same, including house rent and traveling expenses, and also the claim of the bishop apportioned to the district by the Annual Conference, among the different charges in the district, according to their several ability; and in all cases the presiding elder shall share with the pastors in his district in proportion to what they have respectively received. But if there be a surplus of money raised for the support of the pastors in one or more of the charges in his district he shall receive such surplus, provided he do not receive more than his allowance. The minutes of the district stewards' meeting shall be kept by a secretary chosen for the purpose, who shall also record the same in a book of which the presiding elder shall be custodian.—*Discipline*.

To the above enumerated duties and responsibilities must be added all those which belong in common to the members of the Quarterly Conference, and for the district steward those of the District Conference and district stewards' convention. These are set forth in Chapters IX and X of this Part.

The stewards are nominated by the preacher in charge and elected, which implies the Mode of election. power to reject a nomination, by the Quarterly Conference. The result is practically a democratic choice, as few pastors would keep out of the board a man desired by the church to serve in this office. On the other hand, few Quarterly Conferences would confirm the nomination, by election, of a person generally obnoxious to the church. In the days of more frequent change of pastors the stability of the Quarterly Conference was quite essential to any regular administration of the affairs of the church. The mode of electing stewards is designed to this end. It is so evident that the abuse of the power of the pastor for personal ends would react upon himself and injure the church that instances are rare or unknown.

“Let the stewards be persons of solid piety, who both know and love Methodist doctrine and discipline, and who are of good natural and acquired abilities to transact the temporal business of the church.” We shall go far to find a better definition of the qualifications for a steward in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The stewards are to be men of good judgment, men who shall represent the common Various duties. opinion and sentiment of the church and congregation. They are to be men of such piety and weight of character as shall make them best fitted “to tell the preachers what they think wrong in them” in such way as to benefit and help them. They are the chosen counselors of the pastor; they are to be present at all leaders and stewards’ meetings and sessions of the official board and of the Quarterly Conference, so as to be familiar with all the

business of the church. They are the official advisers of the pastor in all his administration.

The care of the poor is specially intrusted to them. As they advise the pastor concerning his work, so they are to inform him of any that are sick or walk disorderly or specially need his attention. Thirteen persons will hear of such things as concern the whole membership more readily and perfectly than one, even if he is the pastor.

All these are duties which pertain to the office of a steward, yet their main charge is a financial one. The entire charge of the current finances of the church is theirs. If these are well managed, and so add to the legitimate influence of the church, they should have the credit. If ill managed and a reproach to the cause of Christ in the community, the remedy is alone with them. If the intent and provisions of the Discipline be carried out there need never be a deficiency in the current finances of Methodism, extraordinary emergencies excepted.

The first duty of the stewards is to estimate the amount needed for the salary of the pastor and the current expenses of the church. This estimate is to be not only on a yearly, but on a monthly, basis. This should be carefully attended to, and the estimate made not only on the basis of what is needed; but with the fixed determination to raise and pay what is necessary for a comfortable support of the pastor and the current expenses of the church, such as lights, fuel, insurance, and the salary of the sexton, organist, etc., where such current expenses are not provided for by the trustees. No man

would expect to hire a day laborer and pay him less than he requires for a bare subsistence. If a charge requires a pastor to live better than a day laborer, to dress so as to attend weddings and funerals, and officiate at the services of the church, and so to furnish his mind as well as his body, it must expect to meet the cost of the service. We are a Protestant Church. We profoundly believe in a married clergy. If we have pastors with families their work must yield them a comfortable support. In all but mission charges the congregation and community expect to do this. In almost any American community they will do it, and do it gladly, if there is an exercise of anything like ordinary business foresight and prudence, and if the official members set the example of giving of their ability as the Lord hath prospered them.

But this will never be realized by passing resolutions or simply adopting a financial plan. It requires earnest effort, prompt, persistent, and systematic, to comply with the provision of the Discipline to ascertain what each member of the church and congregation will give as his monthly (better weekly) contribution toward the finances of the church. This means that the stewards' work is not done, nor can it be interrupted without serious injury, until they have seen and received the pledge or subscription of the last member of the church and congregation able to pay anything for the support of the Gospel in that community. If the pastor is unpaid because this work is undone, the moral obligation to pay the debt is upon the stewards who have failed in their duty, and in that work which

Securing the
pledges of the
congregation.

they were elected to perform. Nor can this work, which should be done at least at the very beginning of the year, be put off until the second or last quarter of the year. Just as well put off sowing until the harvest time and then expect a crop. Our people are many of them poor; they cannot give out of the savings of a month or two what for their own and the church's sake they should give out of the savings of the year. Not until the stewards have promptly and efficiently performed their work have they any right to lay the blame of any deficiency upon the poverty or illiberality of the church. Right here has been the weakness of our Methodist finance. The stewards have of necessity been busy men or women, often the leading business men of the communities. Their time is money to them in their own affairs. They have put off this work of obtaining personal pledges or subscriptions, or, as in some cases, never done it at all; and then, after repeated warnings from the presiding elder, and broken promises of service to be rendered, they wonder if at the end of the year they have to pay much more than their proportion—or let the record of the church be dishonored, with a poor prospect for the next appointment. This is an axiom of the steward's work: he owes to the church and pastor prompt and efficient service, and until this work is done, and done in time, the expenditures of the church are his personal obligations. His work being done when and as it should be done, then, and not before, this financial responsibility ceases. The financial responsibility rests solely upon the stewards until their work is done.

The stewards have work beyond securing pledges

and subscriptions; they are to see to the collection of the amounts pledged. This work, like the other, will need to be done in its time, and will require personal effort and direction. If done regularly, with tact and judgment, it may be done easily. This implies the keeping of accurate accounts by the church treasurer, and the rendering of frequent printed, typewritten, or written reports to be given to all contributors. Only by letting people see, not hear, how their money is spent will they be interested in paying promptly and sustaining a Christian business reputation. All these things, if properly organized and systematically done, can be accomplished with an ease and small expenditure of time and effort amazing to brethren who have followed the shiftless, go-as-you-please method, or lack of method, which prevails in so many charges. These cost the Methodist ministers tens of thousands of dollars yearly, and Methodist churches a loss of influence and opportunities which can never be estimated.

Collection
of amounts
pledged.

Let us sketch a plan which, though it may not be perfect, is in harmony with the intent and provisions of the Discipline, and has the further merit of being practicable, as tested in the actual experience of many churches, large and small.

Financial plan.

In the month before the Annual Conference session let there be held at the church a Church Day. It should be a gathering home of all the families and members of the church and congregation. Letters should be obtained and read from those who are away. Let it be to our church life what

A Church Day.

the New England Thanksgiving Day is to the family life of the people of that descent. There would be no objection to a literary and musical program and a breaking of bread in common. There should be presented to the membership reports of all the church work done during the year, pastoral, evangelistic, teaching and training, benevolent and financial. There should be presented the needs of the church for the year to come—a sort of church budget. Then each person present should be furnished with a personal pledge for weekly or monthly contributions. Those not present should be seen as soon as possible, so that, at the first meeting of the official board or Quarterly Conference for the new Conference year, the officers of the church should be able to state the full financial resources of the church, and with these in view make the estimates for the current year.

These pledges should be given into the custody of an officer of the board known as the financial secretary. He should enter these names and amounts in a book ruled with a column for each Sunday in the year. Envelopes should be furnished to each subscriber, so that each week the amount subscribed may be paid. The envelopes should be numbered with a number the same as that opposite the name of the subscriber on the financial secretary's book. When the envelopes are opened the amount written on the outside is carefully compared with the amount within, and any discrepancy at once noted on the envelope. These envelopes should be kept by the financial secretary, as they are his receipts or vouchers, and his accounts must balance with the amounts they purport to contain.

The moneys so credited and accounted for should be paid over by him to the church treasurer, and by him paid out only upon an order authorized by vote of the board; or the board may fix times of payment for all salaries, as pastor, sexton, organist, etc., at the beginning of the year. The treasurer should take receipts for all moneys paid out, and such receipts should be his vouchers in making his accounts balance with those of the financial secretary.

Treasurer.

Once a month there should be sent to each contributor a financial statement of account, showing how much was pledged, how much has been paid, and whether at the date the contributor's account has been overpaid, balances, or is in arrears. With this should be sent the monthly statement of receipts and expenditures of the church, and the balance then due, if any. Where thought best these reports may be made quarterly, but the monthly report, even with the smallest congregations, is both preferable and profitable.

Financial statement.

A committee should be appointed who should audit the accounts of the treasurer and financial secretary once a year and report to the Quarterly Conference. If they find the accounts correct and the work well done they should by resolutions express their appreciation of such conscientious and unremunerated toil. These resolutions by vote should go upon the records of the Quarterly Conference. The church honors itself in showing proper appreciation of the work of these officers.

Committee of audit.

This plan thoroughly worked and undertaken with good will would put an end to deficiencies in pastoral

support in Methodism. It would also put an end to officers of the Church going about "begging" for the benefit of the Church. Results of the thorough working of this plan. The Church confers immense material benefits upon the community. For every dollar given to the Church the Church of our Lord Jesus makes more than tenfold return. It never begs for its support. Who shall measure its influence for good upon the intellectual, moral, and social life of the community? All these are but incidental to its work of awakening and training the spiritual life of men, setting the door of an open heaven before each individual soul, while leading them to be partakers of everlasting life. The Church does not beg of its adherents, least of all of ungodly men, for its means and right to exist in the community. It comes to men and offers royal bounty to those who of their riches or their poverty contribute to maintain its ministrations and make its life, teachings, and influence an unceasing benediction to the community.

CHAPTER VII.

TRUSTEES.

I. TRUSTEES—THEIR APPOINTMENT AND DUTIES.

¶ 291. Each board of trustees of our church property shall consist of not less than three nor more than nine persons, each of whom shall be not less than twenty-one years of age, two thirds of whom shall be members of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

¶ 292. In all cases where the law of the State or Territory requires a specified mode of election that mode shall be observed.

¶ 293. Where no specific requirement is made the trustees shall be elected annually by the fourth Quarterly Conference of the charge, upon the nomination of the pastor or the presiding elder of the district. In case of failure to elect at the proper time a subsequent Quarterly Conference may elect; and all the trustees shall hold their office until their successors are elected.

¶ 294. All the foregoing provisions shall apply both to the creation of new boards and to the filling of vacancies, whether for houses of worship or dwellings for the preachers.

¶ 295. If the said trustees, or any of them, have advanced any sum or sums of money, or are responsible for any sum or sums of money, on account of the said premises, and they, the said trustees, are obliged to pay the said sums of money, they, or a majority of them, shall be authorized to raise the said sum or sums of money by a mortgage on the said premises, or by selling the said premises after notice given to the pastor or minister who has the oversight of the congregation attending divine service on the said premises, if the money due be not paid to the said trustees, or their successors, within one

year after such notice given; and if such sale take place the said trustees, or their successors, after paying the debt and other expenses which are due from the money arising from such sale, shall pay the balance, if not needed and applied for the purchase or improvement of other property for the use of the church, to the Annual Conference within whose bounds such property is located; and in case of the reorganization of the said society, and the erection of a new church building within five years after such transfer of funds, then the said Annual Conference shall repay to said new corporation the moneys which it had received from the church or society as above mentioned.

¶ 296. No person who is a trustee shall be ejected while he is in joint security for money unless such relief be given him as is demanded, or the creditor will accept, provided he remain a member of our Church.

¶ 297. Charters obtained for our church property shall conform in the manner of creating and filling boards of trustees to the provisions of this chapter.

¶ 298. The board or boards of trustees in any charge shall hold all our church property, using so much of the proceeds as may be needful to pay debts or to make repairs, and shall be amenable to the Quarterly Conference, to which they shall make an annual report, at the fourth Quarterly Conference, embracing the following items: 1. Number of churches and parsonages. 2. Their probable value. 3. Title by which held. 4. Income. 5. Expenditures. 6. Debts, and how contracted. 7. Insurance. 8. Amount raised during the year for building or improving churches or parsonages.

II. FORM FOR CONVEYANCE OF CHURCH PROPERTY.

¶ 299. Before any real estate is purchased for either church, parsonage, or other purpose, let the society, in all States and Territories where the statutes will permit, first incorporate. Let the articles of incorporation provide that the society shall be subject to the provision of the Discipline and the usage and ministerial appointments of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, as from time to time

authorized and declared by the General Conference of said Church, and the Annual Conference within whose bounds such corporation is situated, and that the secular affairs of such corporation shall be managed and controlled by a board of trustees elected and organized according to the provision of said Discipline. Let such article further provide that such corporation shall have power to acquire, hold, sell, and convey property, both real and personal. When this is done let all property acquired be deeded directly to the society in its corporate name.

¶ 300. In States where church property is required to be held by trustees let all deeds under which the church acquires property, whether designed for church or parsonage purposes, be made to the trustees, naming them and their successors in office, followed by these words: "In trust for the use and benefit of the ministry and membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, subject to the Discipline, usage, and ministerial appointment of said Church, as from time to time authorized and declared, and if sold the proceeds shall be disposed of and used in accordance with the provisions of said Discipline." *

¶ 301. In all other parts of such conveyances, as well as in their attestation, acknowledgment, and placing them upon the record, let a careful conformity be had to the laws, usages, and forms of the particular State or Territory in which the property may be situated, so as to secure the ownership of the premises *in fee simple*.

¶ 302. In no case shall the trustees mortgage or encumber the real estate for the current expenses of the church.

¶ 303. Whenever it shall become necessary for the payment of debts, or with a view to reinvestment, to make a sale of church property that may have been conveyed to trustees or church corporation for either of the foregoing purposes, said trustees or their successors may, upon application to the Quarterly Conference, obtain an order—a majority of all the members of such Quarterly Conference concurring, and the pastor and the presiding elder of the district consenting—for

* Forms for incorporations, deeds, etc., can be obtained from the Board of Church Extension.

the sale, with such limitations and restrictions as said Quarterly Conference may judge necessary; and said trustees, so authorized, may sell and convey such property; *provided*, that in all cases the proceeds of the sale, after the payment of debts, if any, if not applied to the purchase or improvement of other property for the same uses, and deeded to the corporation in the same manner, shall be held by such corporation subject to the order of the Annual Conference within whose bounds such property is located, or to the trustees of the Conference Fund; and in all cases where church property is abandoned, or no longer used for the purpose originally designed, it shall be the duty of the trustees, if any remain, to sell such property and pay over the proceeds to the Annual Conference within whose bounds it is located; and where no such lawful trustees remain it shall be the duty of said Annual Conference to secure the custody of such church property by such means as the laws of the State may afford, subject to be returned in the same manner and upon the same contingencies as named in ¶ 295.

¶ 304. Houses of worship and dwellings for the use of pastors may be removed from one place to another on the same conditions on which the same may be sold.

III. BUILDING CHURCHES.

¶ 305. Let all our churches be built plain and decent, and with free seats wherever practicable; but not more expensive than is absolutely unavoidable.

¶ 306. In order more effectually to prevent our people from contracting debts which they are not able to discharge, it shall be the duty of the Quarterly Conference of every charge where it is contemplated to build a house or houses of worship to secure the ground or lot on which such house or houses are to be built, according to our deed of settlement, which deed must be legally executed; and also said Quarterly Conference shall appoint a judicious committee of at least three members of our Church, who shall form an estimate of the amount necessary to build; and three fourths of the money, according to such estimate, shall be secured or subscribed before any such building shall be commenced.

¶ 307. In all cases where debts for building houses of worship have been, or may be, incurred contrary to or in disregard of the above recommendation, our members and friends are requested to discountenance such a course by declining to give pecuniary aid to all agents who shall travel abroad beyond their own circuits or districts for the collection of funds for the discharge of such debts, except in such peculiar cases as may be approved by an Annual Conference, or such agents as may be appointed by their authority.

¶ 308. In future we will admit no charter, deed, or conveyance for any house of worship to be used by us, unless it be provided in such charter, deed, or conveyance that the trustees of said house shall at all times permit such ministers belonging to the Methodist Episcopal Church as shall from time to time be duly authorized by the General Conference of our Church, or by the Annual Conferences, to preach and expound therein God's holy word, and to execute the Discipline of the Church, and to administer the sacraments therein, according to the true meaning and purport of our deed of settlement.

IV. BUILDING AND RENTING PARSONAGES.

¶ 309. It is recommended by the General Conference that our ministers advise our friends in general to purchase a lot of ground in each charge, and to build a parsonage thereon, and to furnish it with at least heavy furniture.

¶ 310. The General Conference recommends to all the charges, in cases where they are not able to comply with the above request, to rent a house for the married pastor and his family, when such are stationed upon the charges respectively, and that the Annual Conferences do assist to make up the rents of such houses as far as they can, when the charge cannot do it.

¶ 311. The stewards in each charge shall be a standing committee, where no trustees are constituted for that purpose, to provide houses for the families of our married ministers, or to assist the ministers to obtain houses for themselves when they are appointed to labor among them.

¶ 312. It shall be the duty of the presiding elders and ministers to use their influence to carry the above rules respecting building and renting houses for the accommodation of ministers and their families into effect. In order to this each Quarterly Conference shall appoint a committee, unless other measures have been adopted, which, with the advice and aid of the ministers and presiding elders, shall devise such means as may seem fit to raise moneys for that purpose. And it is recommended to the Annual Conferences to make a special inquiry of their members respecting this part of their duty.—*Discipline*.

TRUSTEES.

The property of the church, like all estate, real and personal, is under the control and protection of the State. The statutes of the State and the civil law prescribe the tenure and conditions of its use. The State has the power to prescribe the manner of election of trustees. In this country, where Church and State are distinct in their spheres of action, the State upholds the application of the rules of the denomination, or religious body, to their communicants or members, and to their property, where such rules do not conflict with the laws of the State. The decision in the case of *Landers vs. Frank Street Church, Rochester, N. Y.* (97 N. Y. Reports 119), by the Court of Appeals settles for New York, and, through the principles upon which the decision was rendered, for the United States, the right of the Church to enforce the provisions of its Discipline upon the pastor and churches of its communion. This settles what long puzzled our fathers, how to hold our church property for the use of an itinerant ministry. This decision makes it impossible by civil law for the trustees of church or parsonage property

Relation of the
State to church
property.

to close the doors against a pastor legally appointed at the Annual Conference or in the interval of its sessions.

Where the State through its law statutes does not prescribe the manner of electing trustees they are to be chosen by the Quarterly Conference on the nomination of the preacher in charge or the presiding elder of the district. Where the statute does so enjoin due notice of the time of election and the qualifications of voters must be given in the public congregation. The call should be drawn and signed by the clerk of the board of trustees, unless through death, or removal, or resignation there be a vacancy ; and when no clerk *pro tempore* is chosen the president or any three members may call a meeting of the society. The call should specify the trustees whose terms expire and for what time their successors are chosen. In New York the notice or call must be given fifteen days in advance and read on two successive Sundays in the public congregation. The voters include all regular attendants at divine service who contribute to its support, men and women who are at least twenty-one years of age.

At the time for the election the chairman of the board of trustees—that is, the president, or in his absence the vice president, or in case of their absence one of the board—calls the meeting to order. In the absence of president and vice president the meeting will elect a president *pro tempore*. If the secretary or clerk of the board is present he will act as secretary, or not, as the meeting shall choose.

* These directions are subject to the statutes of the several States. See *Laws Relating to Religious Corporations*, by Rev. Sandford Hunt, D.D.

The meeting will choose a secretary, who shall keep its minutes. The president should appoint tellers. The vote should be by ballot. In this meeting the pastor has no right as pastor, only a vote of a private member, if he so chooses, for each trustee. The vote should be declared by the tellers, and over their names given to the secretary for record.

After the trustees are chosen they should immediately organize by choosing their president or chairman, vice president, secretary or clerk, and treasurer for the year.

The duty of the board as thus organized is to hold the property for the use of the society. This includes taking care that it has legal and valid title to its property, and that this title is maintained intact. In all cases of doubt recourse should be had to the presiding elder, who by the Discipline is specially commissioned to look after the titles of church property. Upon his advice—and he should certainly be consulted—legal counsel may be taken. This duty of the board includes the proper custody of all deeds and other papers of title and their record, as well as of all mortgages belonging to the church society and all discharges secured by them. Many boards of trustees often fail in providing a suitable place for such papers and for their proper record and care.

The trustees are to see that the church property is protected from the encroachment of adjacent owners.

Where a church or parsonage edifice (or buildings) is already in existence, unincumbered, the business of the trustees is first to see that it is kept in proper repair. This does not mean a re-

Duties.

Titles.

Care of buildings.

modeling of the edifice, but its proper protection from the elements, by the care of its foundations, roof, paint, etc. These things should be looked after promptly, and with the care that a landlord would take of property for a desirable tenant.

The trustees are the custodians of the property for the church and the congregation, and are Custody of the property. to see that it is used only for the purpose for which it was erected. All religious services and church assemblies are under the control of the pastor. He has the right to use the church for these purposes without interference from the trustees, provided these are such as pertain to, or are in harmony with, his office as pastor of the church and congregation. The trustees have no right to let the church building for purposes which would be offensive to the congregation or out of harmony with the religious services celebrated therein.

In case the property is incumbered, if the trustees are holden the Discipline makes provision for If incumbered. their security. On the other hand, if the society be in debt, and have real property or bequests accruing, the trustees have no right to apply the proceeds of the sale of the real estate, or the principal of the bequests, to the payment of the interest on the indebtedness or the current expenses. They ought to originate or promote such movements for the payment or funding of the indebtedness as should best secure the property without incumbrance to the church.

In all cases they should see that the property is properly insured, cooperating with the Insurance. Quarterly Conference and presiding elder to that end, and that all taxes are paid. In the case

of sale or removal the Discipline provides that the sale be recommended by the Quarterly Conference, with the consent of the presiding elder, and such other authorization as the courts may prescribe ; when practicable the consent of the society should be obtained. In case of purchase, or the taking of bequests upon conditions, the Quarterly Conference should be consulted. In the organization of a church society consult the Discipline and the statutes of the State ; and

Building.

in rebuilding or the erection of a new edifice not only the consent of the Quarterly Conference, but of the church and congregation, should be obtained. The trustees should insist upon the application of business methods to the raising, care, and expenditure of moneys. Subscriptions should be properly drawn ; they should be discounted for all amounts not worth their face. They should then be near enough to the estimated expenditures, so that the society will not be burdened with a heavy debt, except by its express action.

In all cases the trustees have charge and care of the church property. This, unless otherwise provided for by action of the official board, throws upon them the purchase and payment of the fuel and lighting, and the services of the sexton. The care of legacies and bequests comes upon them, but these should not be desired unless the principal as well as the income can be expended by the church in a definite term of years. Endowed churches are to be avoided in Methodism ; the rare exceptions only prove this rule. The trustees, as such, in a Methodist church have no farther charge of the church finances. It can be nothing less than a per-

Current ex-
penses.

version of their functions when they absorb the work of the stewards and the direction of the official board and the Quarterly Conference. Perversion of functions. This always cripples the usefulness of the pastor and the interest and life of the church. The office and work of the trustees will always give weight to their opinion on financial matters in the official boards and Quarterly Conferences of our larger churches. More influence than that is forbidden by the best interest of the church and of religion in the community.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE OFFICIAL BOARD—LEADERS AND STEWARDS' MEETING.

LEADERS AND STEWARDS' MEETING.

¶ 100. The pastor shall, as often as practicable, hold a meeting of all the leaders and stewards of the charge, to be denominated the Leaders and Stewards' Meeting, in order to inquire, 1. Are there any sick? 2. Are there any requiring temporal relief? 3. Are there any who walk disorderly and will not be reproved? 4. Are there any who willfully neglect the means of grace? 5. Are any changes to be made in the classes? 6. Are there any probationers to be recommended for admission into full membership? 7. Are there any to be recommended for license to exhort or to preach? 8. What amount has been received for the support of the pastor or pastors? 9. Is there any miscellaneous business?—*Discipline.*

The Leaders and Stewards' Meeting was the medium of official action between the sessions of the Quarterly Conference. From it, by the development of our Sunday school and young people's work and the addition of the trustees, came the Official Board. In large churches, however, the latter has not supplanted the former. In all cases involving character and admonition and discipline, the pastor may prefer the smaller body and those whose official relations make them peculiarly his counselors and assistants in matters of this kind. Therefore, with the increased growth of our churches, and with the development of our charitable work, this earliest of lay councils in the

local church will resume its former importance, as giving its care especially to the spiritual life and needs of the membership and to the personal work of caring for the sick, the poor, and the needy.

THE OFFICIAL BOARD.

¶ 101. The Quarterly Conference of any charge may organize, and continue during its pleasure, an Official Board, to be composed of all the members of the Quarterly Conference, including all the trustees, except such trustees and such Sunday school superintendents as are not members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The Official Board may hold its meetings at such times as it may determine, and shall be presided over by the pastor, or, in his absence, by a chairman *pro tempore*, elected by the meeting. When so organized the Official Board may discharge the duties belonging to the Leaders and Stewards' Meeting, except the special duties pointed out in questions 3 to 8 inclusive, in ¶ 100 of the Discipline. It may also devise and carry into effect suitable plans for providing for the finances of the church, and discharge such other duties as the Quarterly Conference may from time to time commit to it, not otherwise provided for in the Discipline. The board shall keep a record of its proceedings, and send the same to the fourth Quarterly Conference for approval.—*Discipline*.

The Official Board is the Quarterly Conference in permanent session for such special work as the latter may commit to it. It is the permanent council of the pastor. While its functions and control are in many directions less than that of the Quarterly Conference, the fact that it is composed of the same persons enables the action of the former body in a considerable degree to be forecast, and when necessary to be anticipated. This body is in permanent session; for although in every properly organized charge the meetings will be held once a month, yet a

special meeting may be called at any time the pastor wishes advice or an emergency arises. This is the body with whom the pastor must be in harmony, and whose active cooperation is necessary to his success.

A few words, then, on the functions of the work of this board. Let meetings be held even on the smallest charges once a month. Suppose there do not appear to be any great necessity or urgent demand for a meeting; not much has happened since the last session; nevertheless the meeting ought to be held. First, because it is a good habit and ought not to be broken into. Second, no one can tell what business may need attention until the official brethren come together; and third, the pastor ought to meet the Official Board once a month, if only to know and keep in touch with the brethren. The main business of an Official Board, all emergencies aside, is to plan the work of the church in time, and then see that its work and business are so carried on that the administration of church affairs will be to its credit, and not bring it into disgrace. The pastor's work is wonderfully kept in hand by the reports to him and his to the brethren; all financial interests of the church thus secure their proper care and provision, so that these demands are promptly met. Then the planning of the work for revival services, for collections, or benevolences, or church improvements, must be done through the Official Board. So any needed control of the choir or Sunday school need not necessarily await the action of the Quarterly Conference; its committees can, if they choose, report to the Official Board for advice or decision. The way a pastor works with his Official Board and secures

their hearty and enthusiastic cooperation is a large element in the success of every year's work on every charge. The Official Board does not do away with the necessity of the Quarterly Conference. Its acts are subject to the revision of the latter body. Not a few of its functions cannot be delegated to the Official Board. All matters affecting change of pastors ought to come before the former body for determinate action.

CHAPTER IX.

THE QUARTERLY CONFERENCE.

¶ 95. The Quarterly Conference shall be composed of all the traveling and local preachers, exhorters, stewards, class leaders, and trustees of churches in the charge, the first superintendents of our Sunday schools, and the presidents of Epworth League chapters; said trustees and superintendents being members of our Church, and approved by the Quarterly Conference. ¶ 97, §§ 3, 5.

¶ 96. The presiding elder shall preside in the Quarterly Conference; or he may appoint a traveling elder to preside; but in the absence of the presiding elder, and of the traveling elder so appointed, the preacher in charge shall preside.

§ 1. The Quarterly Conference shall appoint a secretary, who shall take minutes of the proceedings thereof, and transmit them to the recording steward.

¶ 97. The regular business of the Quarterly Conference is:

§ 1. To hear complaints, and to receive and try charges and appeals, as directed in ¶¶ 229-236, 265.

§ 2. To take cognizance of all local preachers and exhorters in the circuit or station, as provided in ¶¶ 192-200.

§ 3. To receive the annual report of the trustees; to elect trustees where the laws of the State permit; and, at its discretion, to approve for membership in the Quarterly Conference trustees who are members of the church, but who were elected otherwise than by the Quarterly Conference.

§ 4. To elect stewards for the circuit or station, and of these to elect one a district steward and one a recording steward.

§ 5. To have oversight of all the Sunday schools within the bounds of the circuit or station, and to inquire into the condition of each; to confirm or reject Sunday school superintendents nominated by the Sunday school board; at its dis-

cretion to approve for membership in the Quarterly Conference superintendents who may be members of the church; and to remove any superintendent who may prove unworthy or inefficient.

§ 6. To have general oversight of the Epworth League chapters and other organizations of young people; to confirm or reject presidents of the Epworth League elected by the chapters; and to remove any president who may prove unworthy or inefficient.

§ 7. To observe carefully all the obligations laid by the Discipline upon the Quarterly Conference in reference to the support of the ministry and of our benevolent causes.

§ 8. To appoint at the fourth Quarterly Conference committees on (1) Missions, ¶¶ 353-358. (2) On Church Extension, ¶¶ 387, 388. (3) On Sunday Schools, ¶¶ 330-332. (4) On Tracts, ¶ 420. (5) On Temperance, ¶ 189. (6) On Education, ¶ 324. (7) On Freedmen's Aid and Southern Education Society, ¶¶ 393, 394. (8) On Church Records, ¶ 99. (9) On Parsonages and Furniture, ¶ 312. (10) On Church Music, ¶ 57. (11) On Estimating the Pastors' Salaries, ¶ 283. (12) On Estimating the amount necessary for Conference Claimants, ¶ 284.

¶ 98. The order of business in the Quarterly Conference, after the roll of members has been called and a secretary appointed, shall be to inquire:

NOTE.—Questions, or items under questions, marked thus [-1-] are to be considered at the first Quarterly Conference; those marked [-1, 2, 3-] at the first, second, and third Quarterly Conferences; those marked [-4-] at the fourth Quarterly Conference; all other questions and items, at each Quarterly Conference.

1. What trustees are approved as members of the Quarterly Conference? ¶ 97, § 3.

2. Who are confirmed as Sunday school superintendents? ¶ 97, § 5.

3. What superintendents are approved as members of the Quarterly Conference? ¶ 97, § 5.

4. Who are confirmed as presidents of Epworth League chapters? ¶ 97, § 6.

5. Are there any complaints?

6. Are there any appeals?

7. [-1-] What is the complete record of ministerial support for the past year?

1. Paid to pastor.
2. Paid to assistant.
3. Paid to presiding elder.
4. Paid to Episcopal Fund.
5. Paid to Conference claimants.

8. Are there any reports?

1. From the pastor. ¶ 189, § 26.
2. From the local preachers. ¶ 196.
3. From the exhorters? ¶ 200.
4. From the Sunday school superintendents.
5. From the presidents of Epworth League chapters. ¶ 328.
6. From the class leaders. ¶ 51.
7. [-4-] From the trustees. ¶ 298.
8. From committees. ¶ 97, § 8.

9. [-1-] What amounts have been apportioned to this charge this year for the support of the ministry?

1. For pastor.
2. For assistant.
3. For presiding elder.
4. For Episcopal Fund.
5. For Conference claimants.
6. For rent.
7. For traveling and moving expenses.

10. What is the financial plan adopted by the stewards?
¶ 276.

11. Have the directions of the Discipline for raising supplies for the support of the ministry been carried out? ¶¶ 274-276.

12. What amounts have been received this quarter for the support of the ministry, and how have they been applied?

Received:

1. For pastors and presiding elder.
2. For Episcopal Fund.
3. For rent.
4. For traveling and moving expenses.
5. [-4-] For Conference claimants.

Applied :

1. To pastor.
2. To assistant.
3. To presiding elder.
4. To Episcopal Fund.
5. To rent.
6. To traveling and moving expenses.
7. [-4-] To Conference claimants.

13. [-1-] What amounts have been apportioned to this charge this year for benevolent causes ?

1. For Missions.—
2. For Church Extension.
3. For Freedmen's Aid and Southern Education Society.
4. For Education.
5. For Sunday School Union.
6. For Tract Society.
7. For other purposes.

14. [-4-] What amounts have been asked and received for benevolent causes this year ?

1. For Missions: *a*, from church and congregation;
b, from Sunday school.
2. For Board of Church Extension.
3. For Freedmen's Aid and Southern Education Society.
4. For Education: *a*, Children's Fund; *b*, other objects.
5. For Sunday School Union.
6. For Tract Society.
7. For American Bible Society.
8. For Woman's Foreign Missionary Society.
9. For Woman's Home Missionary Society.
10. For other purposes.

15. Are the Sunday schools organized into missionary societies ? ¶ 361.

16. Have the rules respecting the instruction of children been observed ? ¶¶ 332-334.

17. Who are licensed to preach, or recommended to the District Conference for license to preach ? ¶ 193.

18. [-4-] Was the character of each local preacher and exhorter examined ? ¶ 193.

19. [-4-] What local preachers and exhorters have had their licenses renewed, or have been recommended to the District Conference for renewal of license? ¶ 193.

20. [-4-] What local preachers are recommended for orders? ¶ 193.

21. [-4-] What local preachers are recommended for the recognition of orders? ¶ 193, ¶ 153, § 2.

22. [-4-] What local preachers are recommended for reception on trial in the Annual Conference? ¶ 193.

23. [-1, 2, 3-] Is any change desired in the board of stewards?

24. [-4-] Who shall be stewards for the ensuing Conference year? ¶¶ 268-270.

25. [-4-] Who shall be the recording steward? ¶ 268.

26. [-4-] Who shall be the district steward? ¶ 268.

27. [-4-] Who are the trustees of church and parsonage property? ¶¶ 291-293.

28. [-4-] What committees are appointed? ¶ 97.

29. [-4-] Have the General Rules been read this year?

30. [-4-] Has the pastor made a visiting list or plan of his charge, as required by the Discipline? ¶ 189, § 28.

31. Are the church records properly kept? ¶ 99.

32. Is the church and parsonage property insured?

33. When and where shall the next Quarterly Conference be held?

34. Is there any other business?

¶ 99. It shall be the duty of the Committee on Church Records to see that the records of membership, of the leaders and stewards' meeting, of the official board, of the Sunday school board, of the board of trustees, and of the Quarterly Conference are properly kept; and when any of these books are filled up, or are no longer in use, they shall be deposited with the recording steward for preservation.—*Discipline*.

THE QUARTERLY CONFERENCE.

The Quarterly Conference is the legislative, judicial, and executive body of the local church. To it all officers, societies, organizations, and committees report. All officers are amenable

Functions of
the Quarterly
Conference.

to it, and all members may appeal from a committee of trial to it for reversal of judgment ; while it is thus supreme in the sphere of the local church, all other ecclesiastical bodies in Methodism derive their existence from it. The Annual Conference has been the great historic factor in the life of Methodism, but no man can be a member of an Annual Conference without being licensed or recommended for license by a Quarterly Conference or leaders and stewards' meeting composed of its members. The members of the Lay Electoral Conference, who choose the lay delegates to the General Conference, are all chosen by the Quarterly Conference. The lay element in the District Conference is there by the vote of the Quarterly Conference. Without the previous action of the Quarterly Conference there could be no District, Annual, Judicial, or General Conference. It is the great primordial cell in the Methodist economy. It is composed of all officers of the church and representatives of all interests identified with the work of the church. The presiding elder is its president, the pastor has there his place, his voice, and his vote. The traveling preachers residing on the charge are there, so are the local preachers and exhorters. All stewards, class leaders, and presidents of the Epworth League chapters are members, as are those first Sunday school superintendents and those members of the board of trustees who are members of the church. These officers who thus have membership may be men or women. In this Conference the whole church is represented. Coextensive with this representation is the responsibility. If any thing goes wrong in the church, from the pastor down, and it is not known, looked to, and sought

to be remedied, the Quarterly Conference is to blame. It ought to know the details and the tendencies of the church life. It ought to control and guide the work of the church. It may be safely said that if the Quarterly Conferences of Methodism were all they ought to be, and doing all they ought, the success and future prosperity of Methodism would be assured. We shall therefore take a little more space to indicate the functions and work of a successful Quarterly Conference.

The first essential of a successful Quarterly Conference is the attendance of its members.

Attendance.

Men who hold official position in the church who do not regularly attend, or send some sufficient excuse, are unworthy of their trust. Ordinary business is no such excuse; the church might better hire some one to do this private business than to have her work suffer from neglect. Beginning as

Business.

promptly as the members can be assembled, after singing and prayer, the first business is to elect a secretary. A competent secretary who is a ready writer is a great help to the business of a Quarterly Conference. After the calling of the roll comes its perfecting through the confirmation of elections made since the last session of the Quarterly Conference. We pass by all complaints and appeals or judicial proceedings, referring the reader to the Discipline and to the works of Bishops Merrill and Harris.* Then come reports. First, the complete rec-

Pastor's report.

ord of ministerial support for the past year; then the pastor reports his work and that of the church for the quarter. This report is for

* *Digest of Methodist Law*, S. M. Merrill; *Treatise on Ecclesiastical Law*, Henry and Harris.

record, and is the history of the church for the past few months. Nothing can be of less value than the mere skeleton statistics of the official blanks. On the other hand, no one wishes for the extempore meditations on the state of things in general which sometimes flow off from the pastor's pen. There can hardly be three months in any earnest pastor's life and work which shall not yield some fitting materials for historic remembrance. The man who learns the art of rightly putting facts and experiences in the pastor's report has conferred a favor on the Church for all coming generations. What glimpses of heroism, suffering, and devotion, what inspiration to sacrifice, to courage, and to high enthusiasm in the face of difficulties multiplied, may not these records treasure, keep, and reveal to us! Then the local preachers and exhorters report their work. Would that there might be more of it and that it might be better done! Then the Sunday school superintendent reports the state of the Sunday school. This is the place to stir up the brethren's fervent interest and hearty cooperation, to present plans and ideas which shall make the school larger and more efficient. Then come the reports of the presidents of the Epworth League chapters. These should be more than figures; the warm, enthusiastic forelook of the president should be a part of this report. Then the report of the sub-pastors, the class leaders, with the report of the weekly prayer meeting, should give the surest index of the spiritual life of the church. Once a year, at any rate, and oftener if desired, the trustees report upon the state of the church property; and this brings up all questions of repairs and rebuilding and debt paying,

Other reports.

etc. Then the stewards report their financial plan, how it works, and the treasurer presents the report of the current receipts and expenditures for the quarter. The condition of the pastor's salary (house rent, if there is no parsonage) and moving expenses is set forth; the presiding elder, bishops, and Conference claimants, and the expenses for the care of the church, etc. This in many charges means no little admonition, encouragement, planning, and helping to the execution of the plans. The pastor has already reported the benevolences. The only deficiency is that the presidents of the women's missionary societies and the deaconesses do not report their work to the Quarterly Conferences. Of the propriety of that record containing an account of their work there can be no question. Then come the reports of committees. Often of these there are few or none, and again the report of the committee may present matters of the gravest import to the well-being of the society; circumstances, of course, govern this. The care of the Sunday school missionary society and the religious instruction of the children of the church is brought to the special attention of the Quarterly Conference. At all times the Quarterly Conference has jurisdiction over all local preachers and exhorters, as well as all officers of the church, but at the fourth Quarterly Conference the "character" of each local preacher and exhorter is examined. Then each unordained local preacher and exhorter must be recommended for a renewal of his license by vote of his Quarterly Conference, composed largely of laymen, and who ought to know the

Stewards.

Reports of
committees.

Recommendations and renewals of license.

gifts and qualifications of the man they license. If any man is unworthy or inefficient this is the place where the official career should be stopped. No local preacher can be recommended for orders, or for admission to the Annual Conference, except by vote of the Quarterly Conference. This is delicate and most important work, and should be faithfully and conscientiously performed. Few things a church can do of more value than to give its sanction to the opening career of a successful preacher of the Gospel. To have God call one of them and send him forth on that great work is high honor indeed. Would that more Quarterly Conferences were in prayer before God that he might call and fit and qualify the worthiest of their sons for the Gospel ministry! According to the sacredness of this calling should be the care in guarding its approaches from the unworthy and the unfit. May the men *indorsed* by the laymen of our Quarterly Conferences be worthy of their confidence and support in work upon which they have entered! Then comes the nomination and election of the board of stewards. With the swifter revolutions of our itinerancy there came a tendency to permanence in the positions in the Quarterly Conference. A good degree of this is desirable, but an infusion of young, energetic men among our stewards, and sometimes leaders, is greatly desired. Nothing should be done hastily or thoughtlessly, but inquire if God hath not pointed out some specially adapted young men or young women for this work.

Two officers of the Conference are to be elected, the recording steward and the district steward. What the church is in history will depend largely

upon the recording steward. See that he get a
Recording strongly bound, good-sized book, with a
steward. ruled margin, so as to be readily referred
to by marginal index. Let him write a good, fair
hand, diligently transcribe the records, and always
have them with him at the Quarterly Conference for
reference if needed. It is a demoralizing practice for
a body of responsible officers and representatives of
the church to try to recall from memory the action
of a preceding session.

Let the district stewards be the brightest and most
District stew- progressive men of the charge, men who
ard. represent what is best in the life of the
church. They have something else to do besides fix
and apportion the salary of the presiding elder. They
ought to be an inspiration to each other as they com-
pare notes and enter upon the proceedings and take
part in the program of the District Conference or that
arranged for their own convention. This meeting
and consultation ought to be a blessing to every
charge on the district. Then comes the appointment
of the committees of the Quarterly Conference for the
coming year, a work that should be carefully pre-
pared for and thoroughly scrutinized. These com-
mittees should be composed of persons who will work.
How important the committee on the church records!
The records of each year should show a sufficient and
carefully written report of this committee. So of all
the committees; very few of them which will not
make the church stronger, more united, and more
efficient if thoroughly worked.

The Quarterly Conference represents the whole
church. The representation is large; it ought to be

of high character. This is the body qualified to speak as to the desirability of the pastor's return. If that is desired it should be ^{Pastor's return} ^{and successor.} unmistakably expressed. Such expressions honor the Church quite as much as they do the pastor. Few men returning who will not do their work better for that return being requested; on the other hand, if a change is best, this is the place for the pastor or the church to say so, and deal frankly with each other. A strong, devoted, liberal, pious Quarterly Conference means a vigorous and successful church. We should give in this important body more attention to its formation and more prayer to its work. There should gather to its responsibilities, sacrifices, and rewards the strong men and women of the community for the service of God and his Church—men like Stephen, the first martyr deacon, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER X.

THE DISTRICT CONFERENCE.

¶ 87. The District Conference shall be composed of the traveling and local preachers, the exhorters, the district stewards, and also of one Sunday school superintendent, one president of an Epworth League chapter, and one class leader from each pastoral charge in the district. But if there shall be more than one Sunday school superintendent or league president in any circuit or station, then the Quarterly Conference shall designate one of each for this service, and it shall also select the class leader.

¶ 88. The District Conference shall meet once or twice each year in each presiding elder's district, as each District Conference shall determine for itself, at such time and place as the presiding elder shall designate for the first meeting after the adoption of this plan by the district; but the District Conference shall at each meeting determine the place for its next meeting, the time to be fixed by the presiding elder.

¶ 89. A bishop, when present, shall preside at the District Conference. If no bishop be present, the presiding elder of the district shall preside. If neither be present, the District Conference shall choose its own president by ballot from among the traveling elders.

¶ 90. A record of the proceedings of each District Conference shall be kept by a secretary chosen for the purpose, and a copy of said record shall be sent to the ensuing Annual Conference.

¶ 91. The regular business of the District Conference shall be:

§ 1. To take the general oversight of all the temporal and spiritual affairs of the district, subject to the provisions of the Discipline.

§ 2. To take cognizance of all the local preachers and exhorters in the district, as provided in ¶¶ 192-200, and to arrange a plan of appointments for each until the next District Conference.

§ 3. To inquire whether all the collections for the benevolent institutions of the Church, as recognized by the Discipline, are properly attended to in all the pastoral charges, and to adopt suitable measures for promoting their success.

§ 4. To inquire into the condition of the Sunday schools in the district, and to adopt suitable measures for insuring their success.

§ 5. To inquire into the condition of the Epworth League chapters in the district, and to adopt suitable measures for insuring their success.

§ 6. To inquire respecting opportunities for missionary and Church extension enterprises within the district, and to take measures for the occupation of any neglected portion of its territory by mission Sunday schools, and by appointments for public worship.

§ 7. To provide for appropriate religious and literary exercises during the session, for the mutual benefit of those attending upon them.

¶ 92. The order of business for the District Conference shall be:

1. To inquire what members of the District Conference are present.

2. To appoint committees on the

1. Examination of candidates for license to preach.

2. Examination of local preachers in each of the four years of the course of study.

3. Examination of candidates for reception on trial in the Annual Conference.

4. Examination of candidates for orders.

5. Home mission work.

6. Appointments of local preachers and exhorters.

7. Apportionment to each charge of the amounts to be raised for benevolent purposes.

8. Program of religious and literary exercises for the next meeting.

9. Miscellaneous matters.

3. To receive reports:

1. From the presiding elder, as to the condition of the work under his charge, and his own work as presiding elder.
2. From each pastor, as to the religious condition of his charge, his pastoral labors, the benevolent collections, and the circulation of our church periodicals and books.
3. From each local preacher, according to the form prescribed in ¶ 196.
4. From each exhorter, including a statement of the prayer meetings he has held, and other work done, especially in destitute places and among the sick and the poor.
5. From each district steward, as to the temporal affairs of the charge he represents.
6. From each superintendent, as to the condition of the Sunday schools of the charge he represents.
7. From each president of an Epworth League chapter, as to the condition of the chapters of the charge he represents.
8. From each class leader, as to the condition of the classes of the charge he represents.
9. From each committee.

4. To inquire concerning local preachers:

1. Are there any charges or complaints?
2. Who shall have their licenses renewed?
3. Who shall be licensed to preach?
4. Who shall be recommended for ordination?
5. Who shall be recommended for recognition of orders?
6. Who shall be recommended for reception on trial in the Annual Conferences?
7. What work is assigned to each local preacher?

5. To inquire concerning exhorters:

1. Who shall have their licenses renewed?
2. What work is assigned each exhorter?
6. Where shall the next District Conference be held?
7. Is there any other business?

¶ 93. The order of business may be varied, and the business

interspersed with such literary and religious exercises as the Conference may direct.

¶ 94. The provisions for District Conferences shall be of force and binding only in those districts in which the Quarterly Conferences of a majority of the circuits and stations shall have approved the same by asking the presiding elder to convene a District Conference, as herein provided. A District Conference may be discontinued by a vote of the majority of the members present at any regular session, notice thereof having been given at a previous session, and with the concurrence of a majority of the Quarterly Conferences in the district. In those districts in which District Conferences shall be held the powers given to the District Conferences shall not be exercised by the Quarterly Conferences. In all other cases the powers of the Quarterly Conferences shall remain as hereinafter provided.—*Discipline*.

THE DISTRICT CONFERENCE.

The work of the General Conference of 1872 was epoch-making in our history, but not the least valuable part of it was the calling into existence and life of the District Conference. The effect of the measure upon the local ministry has not been all that was hoped, but it has undoubtedly raised the standard of efficiency in this work. But in the care and increase of our benevolences, of our Sunday school and young people's work, the District Conference is indispensable. In other directions the work of the District Conference is even more valuable, and ought to increase each year. This is especially true in regard to preparations for revival work and general advance along lines of united church effort. This is most important where an earnest, persistent endeavor is being made to bring in better methods into current finances. More than all these is the acquaintance and cooperation of

Purpose and functions of District Conference.

the brethren of the district and the impulse which a live and competent presiding elder can give to the spiritual and intellectual life of the ministry of the district. Few men of twenty years' service who cannot look back upon the guidance and inspiration of some presiding officer of the district in these meetings as among the most helpful influences of their life and work. The ministry tends to isolate men. The number of men with whom a reading pastor can talk on a charge about the things that must occupy his thought or affect his spiritual or intellectual life is not large. To come to men who understand the needs of that life, and hear topics presented and discussed showing how other men are thinking along the same lines, is a great help, and prevents more than one man on a poor charge from being overcome by a feeling of mental stagnation or discouragement and saying, What is the use of it all? None of us but can learn from our brethren; all of us feel the power of a fresh enthusiasm. This is especially true of young men. What they are to be in a lifelong ministry is often determined by the atmosphere of the district meetings which they attend for the first few years. In no way can a presiding elder do so much to elevate the tone of the workers and increase the quantity of the work done as by these district meetings. One great trouble with our District Conferences has been to secure the attendance and participation of laymen. They are busy men. We have few men of leisure interested in these things. It is to be hoped that the time may come when our leading laymen will plan to attend these sessions with the same assiduity and forethought as that which characterizes their attendance

upon political conventions or gatherings where large business interests are considered.

The business routine of a District Conference session fortunately is not large. After organization and the choice of the secretary Business. there is the appointment of committees on examination of the local preachers in their course of study, as candidates for orders, and for admission into the traveling connection ; committees on appointments of local preachers and on the apportionment of benevolences ; reports from these committees ; reports from presiding elder ; reports from all pastors, local preachers, exhorters, district stewards, Sunday school superintendents, presidents of Epworth Leagues, and class leaders ; the passage of the character of each local preacher, renewal of license, recommendation for orders or the recognition of orders, or for admission to the Annual Conference. It is unnecessary to dwell upon the importance of these examinations of qualifications and character, or the care with which renewals and recommendations should be granted. The Conference has in its keeping the efficiency and reputation of the local ministry and of the traveling ministry of the near future. While using all necessary safeguards, the work should be full of encouragement to those seeking entrance to the ministry. The reports, if clear, definite, and short, will give a full view of the whole work, which cannot but help and promote unity of feeling and brotherly cooperation.

After all, the great importance of the District Conference to the work of the Church, in inspiring and sounding an advance all along the line, is in that part of the program which is not prescribed but left to the

discretion of the Conference and its committee on programs. What spiritual uplift and vision, what burning enthusiasm, has come with devout consecration to so many preachers' hearts at our District Conferences! What help and cheer in planning our revival work! What wealth of information and stimulus to our connectional benevolences through the addresses of our General Conference officers or of those brethren of the district who have given thorough preparation to these themes! What a help to the intellectual life of all thoughtful ministers and laymen. The discussion of the great questions of the day as they affect our thought, or life, or work; the competent review of the strongest, freshest books—all these give tone and character to our ministry and its work.

A godly, learned, and successful ministry under the leadership of a man of gifts and grace, with a grasp on the present and a prevision of the future, cannot help but make such meetings of great value to young men just beginning their work, to the churches where they are held, and to the entire work of the district.

CHAPTER XI.

THE LAY ELECTORAL CONFERENCE.

¶ 61. The lay delegates shall be chosen by an Electoral Conference of laymen, which shall assemble for the purpose on the third day of the session of the Annual Conference, at the place of its meeting, at its session immediately preceding that of the General Conference.

¶ 62. The Electoral Conference shall be composed of one layman from each circuit or station within the bounds of the Annual Conference, such laymen to be chosen by the last Quarterly Conference preceding the time of the assembling of such Electoral Conference; and on assembling the Electoral Conference shall organize by electing a chairman and secretary of its own number; *provided*, that no layman shall be chosen a delegate either to the Electoral Conference or to the General Conference who shall be under twenty-five years of age, or who shall not have been a member of the Church in full connection for the five consecutive years preceding the elections.—*Discipline.*

The presiding elders, as presidents of all the Quarterly Conferences of the Conference, are the men responsible for the correctness of the roll of the Lay Electoral Conference. They should give credentials signed by the secretary to the delegates and alternates elect. They should also prepare and furnish to the secretary of the Lay Electoral Conference a list of all such delegates and alternates from each charge on his district. Then when the body has come together, opened its session, elected its temporary chairman and secretary, its roll of members can be quickly and

correctly verified. The Conference can then appoint its committees on permanent organization and resolutions. When these report it can proceed to the election of delegates to the General Conference. The result of this election, duly certified by the president and secretary, must be sent to the secretary of the last General Conference; then he must properly make up the roll of members of the next General Conference. Any other business by way of resolution, petition, or instruction of delegates elect may be transacted before the reading of the minutes and adjournment.

HINTS FOR OFFICIAL MEMBERS.

1. *Superintendents.*

Be kind, firm, patient, keeping order, loyal to the church—
not sensitive, not fidgety.

Remarks brief, pointed, pleasant, or impressive.

2. *Presidents of Epworth League Chapters.*

Be prayerful. Expect God's help. Expect the members to
be blessed, to work, to follow your lead as you are led of
the Spirit.

Let the aim of the Chapter be to honor Christ and so help
man. Let its atmosphere be one of loving helpfulness.

Let all that can lighten, brighten, or beautify life or society
be made of service, yet so as to bring and keep God near.
Every talent and gift, every life for consecrated service.
For all the upward look, the helping hand. The conse-
crated life, fellowship, enthusiasm.

3. *Class Leaders.*

Be thoughtful, sympathetic, trustworthy, diligent, wise to
win, train, and save souls.

Strengthen against temptation.

Build up believers.

Reclaim the wayward. Loyal to the pastor.

4. *Stewards.*

Be prompt, farseeing, careful, thorough, just, systematic
in business, sharing others' burdens.

Begin the work in time. Lay the work out thoughtfully,
securing unity of action for the desired results.

Be swift, thorough, and untiring in carrying out the plan,
so that not one person or thing is neglected. Give the
work its proper place. Do all things in order, in season,
in the best manner.

RULES OF ORDER.*

1. *Questions of Order.*

The President shall decide all questions of order, subject to an appeal to the Conference, and in case of such appeal the question shall be taken without debate, except that the President may state the grounds of his decision, and the appellant may state the grounds of his appeal.

2. *Appointment of Committees.*

The President shall appoint all committees, unless otherwise especially ordered by the Conference.

3. *Assigning the Floor.*

On assigning the floor to any member of the Conference the President shall distinctly announce the name of the member to whom it is assigned.

4. *Resolutions and Motions Written.*

Resolutions shall be written and presented in duplicate by the mover, and all the motions shall be reduced to writing if the President, Secretary, or any member requests it.

5. *Secretary to Read all Written Motions, etc.*

All written motions, reports, and communications to the Conference shall be passed to the Secretary, to be by him read to the Conference.

6. *Withdrawing a Motion.*

When a motion is made and seconded, or a resolution introduced and seconded, or a report presented and read by the Secretary, or stated by the President, it shall be deemed in possession of the Conference; but any motion or resolution may be withdrawn by the mover at any time before amendment or decision.

* These Rules of Order comprise the Rules of Order of the General Conference of 1892 from the 3d to the 14th inclusive, and, in addition, Rules 19, 20, 21, 26, 31, and 34. The omitted rules are not of general application, but specially relate to the work of the General Conference.

7. *Nondebatable Motions.*

The motions to adjourn, to suspend the rules, to lay on the table, to take from the table, and the call for the previous question shall be taken without debate.

8. *Order of Subsidiary Motions.*

No new motion or resolution shall be entertained until the one under consideration has been disposed of, which may be done by adoption or rejection, unless one of the following motions should intervene, which shall have precedence in the order in which they are placed, namely :

- (1) To fix the time to which the Conference shall adjourn.
- (2) To adjourn.
- (3) To take a recess.
- (4) To lay on the table.
- (5) For the previous question.
- (6) To postpone to a given time.
- (7) To refer.
- (8) Substitute.
- (9) Amendment.
- (10) To postpone indefinitely.

The motion for the previous question cannot be laid on the table.

9. *Amendments and Substitutes.*

Only one amendment to an amendment shall be in order, but then it shall be in order to move a substitute for the main question and one amendment to the substitute, and if a substitute is accepted it shall replace the original proposition. In voting the Conference shall pursue the following order, namely : the main question shall first be perfected by voting on the amendments proposed to the main question, and then the Conference shall vote upon the substitute and its amendment.

10. *Members Must Address the Chair and Obtain Recognition.*

When any member is about to speak in debate, or to deliver any matter to the Conference, he shall arise and respectfully address the President, but shall not proceed until recognized by him, and the member must address the Chair from his place.

11. *Calling Members to Order.*

No member shall be interrupted when speaking except by the President, to call him to order when he departs from the question, or uses personalities or disrespectful language; but any member may call the attention of the President to the subject when he deems the speaker out of order, and any member may explain when he thinks himself misrepresented.

12. *Privileged Questions.*

When a member desires to speak to a question of privilege he shall briefly state the question; but it shall not be in order for him to proceed until the President shall have decided it a privileged question.

13. *Time and Order of Speeches in Debate.*

No person shall speak more than twice on the same question, nor more than ten minutes at one time, without leave of the Conference; nor shall any person speak more than once until every member choosing to speak shall have spoken. Provided, however, that a committee making a report shall, through its chairman, or one of its members selected by the committee or its chairman, in all cases be entitled to ten minutes to close the debate, either to oppose the motion, to lay the report on the table, or, this permission not having been used, to close the debate on the motion to adopt. The committee shall not be deprived of its right to close the debate even after the previous question has been ordered.

14. *Reconsideration.*

When any motion or resolution shall have been acted upon by the Conference, it shall be in order for any member who voted with the prevailing side to move a reconsideration; but a motion to reconsider a nondebatable motion shall be decided without debate.

15. *Yeas and Nays.*

It shall be in order for any member to call for the yeas and nays on any question before the Conference, and if the call be sustained by one fourth of the members present, the

vote thereon shall be taken by yeas and nays. If not sustained, members voting in the minority may have their votes recorded by name.

16. *Previous Question.*

It shall be in order to move that the question be taken without further debate on any measure pending, except in cases in which character is involved, and if sustained by a vote of two thirds, the question shall be so taken; nevertheless, it shall be in order under this rule to move to recommit, to divide, or to lay on the table after the previous question has been ordered.

17. *When a Motion to Adjourn is in Order.*

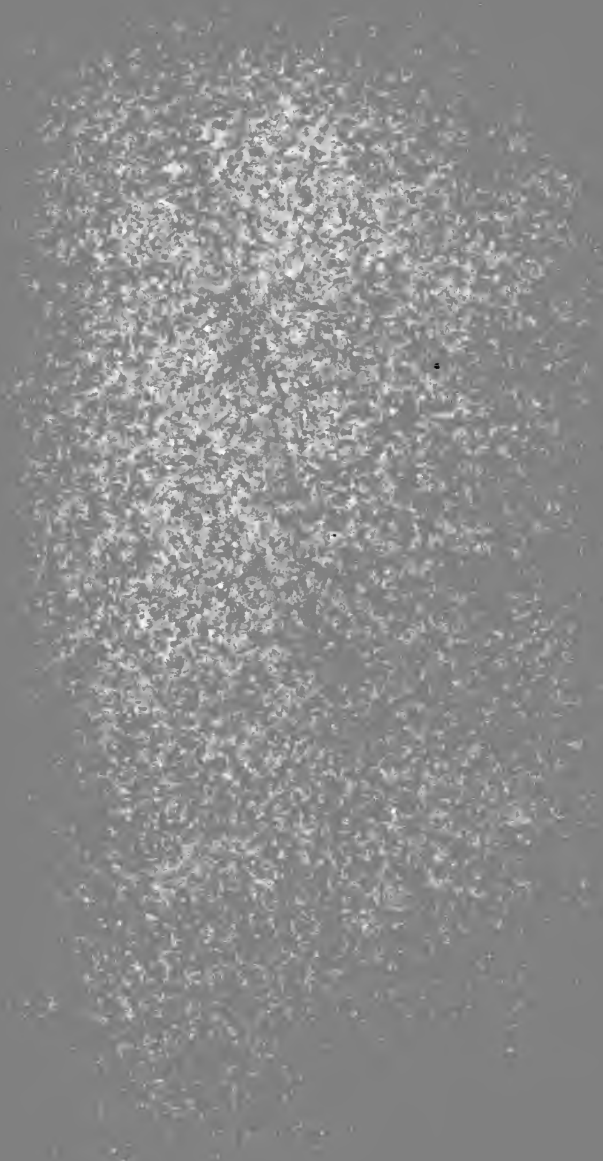
The motion to adjourn shall be taken without debate, and shall always be in order, except (1) when a member has the floor; (2) when a question is actually put, or a vote is being taken; (3) when the question is pending on seconding the demand for the previous question; (4) when the previous question has been called and sustained, and is still pending; and (5) when a motion to adjourn has been negatived and no business or debate has intervened.

18. *Demonstrations During Debate.*

All demonstrations of approval or disapproval during the progress of debate shall be deemed a breach of order.

19. *Suspension of Rules.*

These rules shall not be suspended except by a vote of two thirds of the members present and voting.



PART III.

LAY ORGANIZATION IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

THE LAITY IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

BY REV. CHARLES J. LITTLE, D.D., PROFESSOR OF CHURCH
HISTORY IN GARRETT BIBLICAL INSTITUTE, EVANSTON,
ILL.

THE LAITY IN THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

BY REV. HENRY ANSTICE, D.D., RECTOR OF ST. LUKE'S
AND DEAN OF ROCHESTER.

THE LAITY IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

BY REV. HENRY H. STEBBINS, D.D., PASTOR OF THE CEN-
TRAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ROCHESTER, N. Y.

EFFICIENT BAPTIST CHURCHES.

BY REV. BENJAMIN O. TRUE, PROFESSOR OF CHURCH
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DENOMINATIONAL STATISTICS OF THE UNITED STATES.

CHAPTER I.

THE LAITY IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

BY REV. CHARLES J. LITTLE, D.D.

THE existing evidence tends to show that in the Primitive Church laymen could upon The Primitive Church occasion (1) teach or preach; (2) baptize; (3) celebrate the eucharist; (4) exercise discipline. Not until the communities grew in size did the idea take root that the church officers possessed exclusive powers. During the second century, however, the church officers amplified their jurisdiction, and laid claim to exclusive functions and superior importance. This led to the Montanist reaction, the Puritan uprising in which the great Tertullian shared, a powerful but unsuccessful struggle against the rapidly developing hierarchy. Yet the laymen were only gradually excluded (1) from preaching, *a*) when the bishop was present, *b*) when a church officer was present, *c*) altogether; (2) from the altar, although in Milan until comparatively late times, and in Gaul until the sixth century, the laity made their offerings at the altar, (3) from participation in ecclesiastical tribunals. Analogous to this exclusion from the performance of church function was the exclusion of the laity from participation in the

The Montanists.

A. D. 160.

Laymen excluded from preaching.

From the altar.

From the exercise of discipline.

election of bishops and church officers. At first the people of the congregation elected subject to the approval of their president; then the officers nominated and the people approved; finally the people might object only to an unsuitable candidate.

But the decrees of Constantine and his successors gradually transformed the entire polity of the Christian Church. For the officers of the church were accorded an exceptional position in the State and given a distinct legal *status*. The rise of Monasticism, moreover, compelled them to adopt a code of morals different from that of ordinary Christians. In addition the sacerdotal ideas of the Jewish and Roman rituals cooperated to make the clergy a separate class. Clothed thus with unusual and exclusive privileges, they were regarded also with superstitious reverence by the laity, who had neither a dream nor a desire of the equality possessed by the members of the Primitive Church.

In the days of Theodoric the Goth a synod of Rome declared that all interference of laymen in church matters was inadmissible. For ten centuries this was the watchword of the papal hierarchy. Hence the struggle to escape the domination of the emperor at Constantinople, the frequent conflicts with the princes of Europe, the deadly battle with the Holy Roman Empire; hence, too, the struggles with Arnold of Brescia and the Roman people, and with many cities and princes of Italy. The question of lay investiture involved, of course, the rights of princes only. But in

And from elections.

The Church of the Roman Empire.

Monastic life and sacerdotal ideas.

The synod of Pope Symmachus, A. D. 498.

Lay investiture.

the Middle Ages cities, too, were sometimes sovereign. Looking backward, the historian sees clearly enough now that the cause of the princes and of the free cities was really the cause of the people, though not unfrequently righteousness and truth were with the pope. For what the rulers of Europe retained and won for themselves in these protracted struggles has become in the passage from monarchy to democracy the possession of mankind. And the diets and parliaments developed in the Middle Ages were the beginnings of that representative government which has been adopted into the polity of the Protestant Church.

The laymen of the mediæval Church revealed their piety in another form, in the military orders of Knights Templar and Knights of the Sword. When the Knights Templar were suppressed a principal charge against the order was a performance of spiritual functions by their grand masters.

In the great mediæval cities laymen were active in the erection of churches and in the organization of charities. The *Buonumini di San Martino* of Florence, for instance, was an organization for practical work among the poor which would have delighted the heart of John Wesley or of Thomas Chalmers, so simple was it, yet so thoroughly efficient.

But the great work of mediæval laymen was the creation of the universities; for the laymen, not the clergy or the monks, originated these fountains of light and liberty. Monks and popes were quick to perceive their significance and to foresee their reign of power; they were eager to

The people won when the princes finally triumphed.

The lay orders.

Lay organization of charity.

The universities.

attempt and partially succeeded in their capture ; but in the end the universities escaped papal control, and their escape carried with it the emancipation of Europe.

Simultaneous with the rise of the universities appeared in western Europe, but chiefly in France, a number of lay preachers, of whom the poor men of Lyons were perhaps the most important. These were of both sexes, and were led by the influence and example of Peter Waldo to their proclamations of the Gospel at the church doors, in public places, and in private houses. The Cathari were equally active, and the Albigenses of Toulouse showed a zeal and a heroism in the propagation of their heresies which aroused the pope to a frenzy of persecution.

To counteract this preaching of lay heretics the orders of St. Dominic and St. Francis were established and encouraged by the papal authority. These preaching brothers were laymen originally, soldiers of the cross, who gave up everything in order to carry the banners of salvation to the farthest corners of the earth.

But in less than ten centuries these orders had become so insolent and unspiritual that, to oppose them in England, John Wiclif established his itinerant ministry, in which laymen also were employed.

Yet only with the Reformation did the layman enter again into his lawful authority in Jesus Christ. Since the days of Luther and of Latimer he has been slowly recovering what belonged to him in the days of Peter and of Paul.

Slowly recovering; for though Luther struck the hierarchy in the eye, teaching that the children of Christ are born equal, that all believers are priests in Jesus Christ, and although both he and Zwingli interpreted the Bible to mean that all ecclesiastical power inheres, under Christ, in the congregation of believers, nevertheless the stress of circumstances compelled an organization of superintendents and consistories, which, though admitting the lay element, admitted it in the baneful form of State interference and State supremacy.

Luther.

Zwingli.

Each of the German States (even in the new empire) having its own church system, the part taken by the laity in ecclesiastical affairs is not easy to set forth. Prussia, the largest and most important State in the empire, has, owing to the peculiarities of its growth, more than one system in active operation. Yet, in general, it may be said that recent legislation in Prussia tends to emancipate the Church from bondage to the State; nevertheless the goal is far from reached.

Prussia.

The Supreme Church Council, which sits at Berlin, is presided over by a layman and consists of twelve members, a majority being clergymen. Subordinate to these are eight provincial consistories, the number of members in which varies from six to fifteen. These, like the Supreme Church Council, have also a mixed membership. This consistorial government, however, is connected closely with a synodal organization of the several churches which is established upon Presbyterian principles. In each church community there are two church councils, one consisting

of elders, the other of representatives, both chosen by the male members of the parish, both presided over by the pastor. The functions of the elders are of great importance. They must exercise discipline, see to the proper performance of the public worship, look after the education of the children, take care of poor and sick and orphaned, appoint church officers, arrange elections of pastors, and manage the church property.

The parish representatives appear to be a kind of senate cooperating with the elders in matters of unusual importance, only the number of representatives is three times that of the elders, and certain acts are invalid without their sanctions. Manifestly in this system the ideas of Luther and of Calvin have reached a curious blending.

Calvin. Calvin was never a man of the people; he was theologically and politically despotic in theory and in practice. He had no sympathy with the views of Zwingli and of Luther touching the priesthood of believers. Yet Calvin created the lay eldership. He confessed

Lay elders.

that it was an expedient to which he was driven by the peculiar circumstances of Geneva; but only *after* he had adopted it reluctantly did he seek scriptural support to defend it from attack. God, who is wiser than Calvin, and compels his elect to build better than they know and stronger than they intend, was on the side of the church session. The local and temporary expedient of John Calvin, of Geneva, became a unit of church government in Holland, in Scotland, and in America; lay cooperation in church administration became the law and the life of many powerful denominations.

How rapidly *post facto* discoveries of Scripture can be made is shown in the "Sacred Discipline" subscribed to by Thomas Cartwright and five hundred other divines. For they were infallibly convinced that "there can be but one right church order and form," and that in every particular church there ought to be a presbytery of elders by whom "all things are directed that belong to the state of the church."

The Sacred
Discipline.

This was to set up in every parish in England the "lordlie tyrannie" so sharply denounced by Robert Browne, the father of the Separatists, from whom the Leyden pilgrims sprang. He found these tyrants, he said, "in the best reformed places in Scotland, in Donde, St. Andrewes, Edenborough, and sundrie other tounes." Knox's idea of the Church, like Calvin's, was territorial; there could be but one Church, and everybody living within the geographical limits of a parish belonged to and was subject to that parish until excommunicated from it, and in the latter case subject as much as ever. This is the explanation of Milton's famous line :

The Separatists.

"New Presbyter is but old Priest writ large."

The Anabaptists of the Continent and the Brownists of England were the first to reaffirm in practice what Luther and Zwingli had declared in principle, to wit, the equality of all believers in the Christian community. "In all y^r meetings," runs the deposition of John Dove, taken in 1588, the Brownists "teach that there is no Heade or Supreme Gouvernour of the Church of God but Christ; . . . that a private man being a brother may preach to beget fayth; . . . that

there needeth not publique ministers, but every man in his own calling is to preach the Gospel." From these despised Separatists came the English Independents, to whom Cromwell and many of his bravest soldiers belonged; from them came also "the two effective aggregations of English-born Independency beyond the bounds of England—the small Dutch scattering and the massive American extension.

But when Cromwell died the Commonwealth perished and the bishops came back. With the latter came evil days for Independents, Baptists, and Quakers. The development of democracy in the English Church was driven under ground for a while, to reappear in a unique form in John Wesley.

Like John Calvin, he had a keen appetite for power. But then he had the instincts and the genius of a ruler of the people. He never intended to create either his denomination or his remarkable machinery of lay cooperation. In fact, he invented nothing; but having an eye as keen as Darwin's for providential potencies he seized and developed them into permanent powers. Robert Browne, John Robinson, George Fox, John Bunyan, all insisted upon the right of the disciple to speak for his Master. The Moravians had their societies and their inward witness. But John Wesley first gave the modern world lay preaching on a large scale. His itinerant helpers were for the most part unordained laymen; from their experience of sin and of salvation they derived their duty of personal endeavor for the salvation of mankind.

Calvin's eldership, so reluctantly adopted, was but

an expedient for ruling the canton parish of Geneva. Wesley's societies and Conferences were a contrivance for spreading scriptural holiness through the world-parish to which he was called. To the question, "Who shall speak and work in the societies?" Wesley answered, "All who will obey me in Jesus Christ;" to the question, "Who shall rule in the societies?" Wesley answered, "I only, and I see no harm in it."

These itinerants, of course, tended to become a class, an ordained clergy, and after Wesley's death the transformation was completed. For though in his famous Poll Deed the government of the societies passed from John Wesley to the Legal The Deed Poll. Hundred, "preachers and expounders of God's Holy Word under his care and in his Connexion, and their successors for the time being forever," yet to pacify the people the preachers thus endowed with executive power found it necessary to promulgate a "Code of Laws" and a "Plan of Pacification," in which the people were guaranteed their respective rights and privileges. Yet not until the Methodists of America had introduced lay representation did the British Methodists introduce it into their system, and then in a most cautious and experimental fashion. This might have proved exceedingly disastrous had not the local societies possessed much power, and had not the structure of them, the offices of class leader, steward, exhorter, local preacher, afforded ample scope for lay activity.

Wesley found the suggestion of his societies in the bands of the Moravians. The first of his own forming began in 1738; from this Wesley and a number of others withdrew in 1739. The City Road Society was then founded and followed speedily by societies

in every part of England. These were intended to be auxiliary to the Church of England, and the conditions of membership were at once simple and rigidly applied. Lay preaching began of itself in 1740. Classes and class leaders were created at Bristol about the same time, and the famous rules for stewards were framed in 1747. All this came about quite naturally, Wesley developing the opportunities and suggestions that came to him with marvelous skill. In doing so he gave an impulse to lay cooperation in Christian work that has marked the nineteenth century with exceptional interest in Christian history. It is the century of Sunday schools (Wesley sharing with Robert Raikes the glory of their origin); it is the century of missionary societies, in which laymen have participated from the beginning; it is the century of young men's Christian associations, of young people's leagues, of woman's missionary societies, of lay evangelists like Moody and Robert Pearsall Smith, of church congresses where laymen are mighty in speech, of church journals where laymen vie with clergymen in shaping the thought of the Church and the conduct of the world.

Doubtless the coming of democracy to America in 1776 and to Europe in 1789 has greatly influenced this popularizing of Christian institutions. Nevertheless lay activity was the heart of the great revival of the eighteenth century, and lay activity is in any generation the true measure of the life of God in this Church. In a phrase quoted none too often it is now recognized nearly everywhere that the minister's parish is not "his field, but his force."

While Wesley was thus, with his friends and help-

ers, transforming the religious character of England, the English in America had become a nation. An opportunity was about to be

The Church in America.

given the Christian Church unknown in all its history—the opportunity to develop its life without let or hindrance. In many colonies the largest liberty of church organization had been permitted before the Revolution; the fear that this liberty was to be withdrawn and the Church of England established everywhere was one of the potent causes of the Revolution. Nevertheless, the Congregationalists of New England had developed in a most peculiar fashion. The founders of the State were the pillars of the Church.

The Congregationalists.

Indeed, they founded a Church-State, excluding from suffrage all who were not church members. This led to a reaction, which subordinated the church to the parish; that is, to all the voters of the town, whether church members or not. The practical working in the first case was the creation of church councils, and the subjugation of the local churches to the civil magistrates; in the second, the degradation of the church members “by putting the liberties of the churches into the hands of the whole inhabitants of the town.”

Presbyterianism, on the other hand, developed in the colonies into the simple and efficient system of churches, presbyteries, synods, and General Assembly such as we now see it. The General Assembly consists of an equal delegation of bishops and elders from each presbytery, and is the highest judicatory of the Presbyterian Church.

The Presbyterians.

After the Revolution the adherents of the Church

of England in the United States were for a while in a bad case. Yet under the political atmosphere of the colonies vestrymen and church wardens had developed an appetite for ecclesiastical authority which led to the admission of the laity into ecclesiastical councils and to coordinate power, first in the Church of Pennsylvania and then in that of all the States.

In October, 1784, fifteen clergymen and fifteen laymen met in New York and commended the principles which were subsequently adopted in the organization of the Protestant Episcopal Church, to wit: A general convention, the deputies to consist of clergy and laity, these to deliberate together, but the concurrence of both orders to be necessary for the validity of a vote.

But the terms "warden" and "vestry," as used by the Episcopalians of America, by no means imply that the "parish" of England is constituted like the parish in America. An English parish has two sides, the civil and the ecclesiastical. The vestry meeting is an assembly of the ratepayers of the civil or poor-law parish. This vestry meeting elects the parish officers; that is, the churchwardens and way wardens, the assessors, the overseers, the vestry clerk, the collector of poor rates. The meetings of the vestry are presided over by the minister of the ecclesiastical parish, and may be called at any time upon a three days' notice.

The ecclesiastical parish, although quite definite in its boundaries, is not necessarily a contiguous territory. The rector of the parish owns the church and churchyard *subject to the uses* of the parishioners. The church wardens are the principal lay officers.

Their duty is to keep church and churchyard in repair, to keep order in the church during divine service, to raise funds for church work by voluntary rates, to furnish annual accounts to the Local Government Board.

In America there is, of course, no such twofold aspect of the parish. Wardens and vestrymen constitute a board of trustees The American parish. elected by the pewholders or by whoever may be designated in the charter of the corporation.

The church guilds that exist in many parishes of the United States are organizations of young men for religious and charitable work; they are constituted simply, and where the rector has administrative energy and tact they are singularly efficient Church guilds. both in preserving vital piety among their members and in making the church a power in the community. The rapid growth of Episcopalianism in certain cities is due to the great wisdom displayed in the organization of the lay element of the parish. St. Mark's, of Philadelphia, and Trinity, of Boston, are notable instances of organizing skill.

The Methodist Episcopal Church was organized at Baltimore in 1784. Thanks to the genius of John Wesley, the local society was already quite perfect, leaving little room for any further development of lay activity. Indeed, with the exception of the Church Lyceum, recognized by the Discipline of 1884, the Epworth League, the organization of which was completed in 1892, and the The Methodist Episcopal Church. woman's missionary societies, foreign and home, nothing of moment has been added to the local machinery. Into the various boards instituted

from time to time for the supervision of connectional benevolences laymen have been introduced from the beginning; and they have in recent years created societies for city evangelization which in 1892 were formally recognized by the General Conference.

But quite early in the history of the Church the question of admitting laymen to a participation in church government was raised and discussed.

The genius of Methodism involved lay representation, for Methodism is (1) the joyful proclamation of a personal experience of Jesus Christ, and (2) the perfection of personal experience in Christian fellowship. The separation of its ministry from its laity in legislation and ultimate decision was therefore illogical and dangerous; all the more so in a democratic country, in a period of democratic development, and in the presence of Congregational societies, Baptist meetings, Presbyterian assemblies, and Episcopal conventions making an open display of lay activity and lay authority. After an exciting and protracted agitation lay delegates were admitted to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1872, and the question of the admission of women delegates now occupies attention. In the Congregational Church women were formerly denied the right of suffrage, both in England and in America. The prohibitions of the New Testament were held to cover voting as well as speaking in the churches. But female suffrage, as well as speaking, is now common in Congregational churches, and where the State allows it in societies or corporations.

The Presbyterian Assembly of 1832 inhibited women from speaking to promiscuous gatherings, but the

Assembly of 1874 committed the whole subject to the pastors and elders of the churches. The tendency is therefore manifestly to enlarge the sphere of womanly activity and responsibility in the specifically Protestant churches. How far this tendency will reach the future only can disclose.

In early Methodism the preaching of women was not uncommon, and in class and love feast speech, one may say, was required of them.

Women.

The Society of Friends had preceded the Methodists in this matter, and the eloquence and noble character of some of their female preachers have done much to break down the prejudice against the participation of women in the proclamation of the "good news."

The Roman Catholic Church, since the days of Paula and Scholastica, has encouraged women to abandon the world and to give themselves to works of prayer and mercy and instruction. The calendar of saints abounds in the names of consecrated daughters of the Church. The deaconesses of German Protestantism, the sisterhoods of England, the deaconesses and sisterhoods of American Protestantism, are, however, not an imitation of these; they are rather one of the many indications of a return to apostolic Christianity gilding the last years of this century with the promise of a fresh outburst of divine-human activity, of the kingdom of heaven close at hand.

The Roman Catholics.

The Roman Catholic Church also has been touched with the spirit of the age. Laymen appear in the congresses and councils of the Church, both in Europe and America, and the entire world is embraced by the Apostleship of Prayer or League of the

Sacred Heart. This League originated in the beatification of Sister Margaret Mary, a French nun, who left on record certain revelations made to her of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This League, the members of which are counted by millions, is made up of circles limited to fifteen. Each circle is watched over by a promoter who founds and fosters it. There are three degrees attainable: 1. The morning offering; 2. The daily rosary decade; 3. The monthly communion of reparation. This Apostleship of Prayer numbers, among the English-speaking Catholics of the United States, 1,465,500 associates. It is, however, purely devotional, holding no meetings whatever, the members simply binding themselves to pray. It comprises both sexes and all ages.

The sodalities require of their members "more than ordinary piety." The Roman primary is the mother and parent of all sodalities, and with this many of them are canonically affiliated.

In addition to the League and the sodalities there are among Catholics various benevolent and charitable organizations of laymen under the supervision of the parish priest and diocesan bishop. So that, in spite of the exclusion of the laity from participation in church government, the Catholics are recognizing the power of the laity and the necessity of organizing them for specific purposes if they would not lose them from the Church.

CHAPTER II.

THE LAITY IN THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

BY REV. HENRY ANSTICE, D.D.

THE “functions of the laity” in the Protestant Episcopal Church may be most intelligibly set forth by some consideration of the three distinct relations to the Church which they sustain as (1) legislators, (2) members of vestries, and (3) as parish workers. Their functions in the sphere first named are the creation of the constitution and the canon law; in the second of these spheres State legislation largely prescribes and regulates their powers, while in the third the functions exercised are voluntary and defined by custom and parochial authority.

I. Consideration of the functions of the laity in the legislation of the Church makes evident the fact that their power is only equaled, not exceeded, by that of the bishops and other clergy. The organic legislative bodies are diocesan and general—the Diocesan Council and the General Convention.

The integer of the Church is the diocese or jurisdiction of a bishop, whose limits are determined by the law controlling its erection. Its governing body consists of its bishop (who is vested with legally defined executive functions), of all the clergy “canonically resident” within the See and recognized by the diocesan constitution as entitled to a seat and vote,

and of lay representatives from every parish and missionary station similarly entitled. This body, so constituted, is vested with supreme legislative power in all diocesan matters, subordinate only to the higher authority of the constitution and canons of the whole Church as formulated by the General Convention. In every diocesan council there is legal provision for "a vote by orders," the effect of which is that nothing can be done without the consent of a majority of the lay representatives. On any question deemed of grave importance where radical diversity of view exists, the roll is called, first of the clergy, then of the parishes; and there must be concurrence of a majority of both the clergy and the laity to give effect to any resolution; so neither can infringe upon or override the other's rights. In the election of a bishop the same rule obtains; in fact, it is obligatory that the choice should be effected by such concurrence of votes taken by each order separately. At every diocesan council a body known as the "Standing Committee" is elected to exercise certain powers of the council *ad interim*, and this body in almost every diocese is composed of an equal number of clergymen and laymen. It constitutes the bishop's "council of advice," and without a certain testimonial signed by its members the bishop has no power to ordain a deacon or a priest. In the event of the bishop's death or disability, the standing committee becomes the "Ecclesiastical Authority" of the diocese for all those parts of a bishop's administrative duty which do not require episcopal consecration for their validity; and the bishop may by his own act devolve such authority on the committee in the event of temporary incapacity or prolonged ab-

sence from the diocese. The functions of the laity as diocesan legislators are thus seen to be signally important. They have practically veto power on any measure which may be proposed; without their signatures, the way to Holy Orders is barred against an applicant; they have an equal voice in choosing their chief pastor, and in a vacancy in the episcopate they share in exercising the "ecclesiastical authority."

Their other legislative sphere is in the General Convention. In this great body vests the supreme law-making power. It consists of two houses—the House of Bishops, in which all bishops exercising jurisdiction are entitled to a seat, and the House of Deputies, composed of four clerical and four lay representatives from each of the fifty-two dioceses now constituting the American Church (1893). Concurrent action of both houses is essential to the passage of a measure. But no measure can be adopted in the lower house unless a majority of the dioceses, both in the clerical and lay representations, yield their assent. This "vote by dioceses and orders" can be demanded by the clerical or the lay representation of any diocese; but in the absence of such demand a question can be determined by acclamation or otherwise, as in other deliberative bodies. But the effect of this constitutional provision is to give the laity an equal power with the clerical members and with the House of Bishops. From all which it appears that the functions of the laity in the legislative sphere are of the gravest, most potential character.

II. The functions of the laity as members of a vestry bring under review their official duties in the

parish with which they are connected. The vestry is the body which in this State (New York), as in most others, consists of and has for its legal title "the rector, churchwardens, and vestrymen." The law of its constitution varies in different dioceses, because a subject of diocesan rather than general legislation, and because as a "religious corporation" it is the creature of the civil law governing the incorporation of parishes in the several States. It will suffice, however, here to speak in general terms of the official functions which membership in a vestry, whether as a warden or a vestryman, involves.

The legal incorporation of a parish is effected under State law and involves the creation of a vestry, and a certificate of such incorporation is requisite before an organized parish can be recognized as an integral part of the diocese. The vestry consists of two churchwardens and a number of vestrymen (usually from four to eight, who, together with the rector, if there be one, constitute the body corporate by the name expressed in the legally prescribed certificate of incorporation. This body are the trustees of the church, and are empowered to possess and control all its temporalities of every name and nature until the next ensuing Eastertide election by duly qualified electors of the congregation which they represent. Its administration of affairs must be in strict accordance with the canon law. Among its functions may be named the appointment of its own clerk and treasurer, and of such under-officers as sexton, choir master, and the like, who receive compensation; the care of the church edifice and rectory and other property; provision for all salaries, improvements, and repairs; collec-

tion of the church's revenue; and when the rectorship is vacant to take the custody of the church plate and sacred vessels and the parish register, and to arrange for maintenance of public service. The vestry also sign certificates in favor of young men aspiring to the sacred ministry, and elect delegates to represent the parish in the council of the diocese. The right to call a rector vests in the wardens and the vestrymen, and the amount of salary named in the call cannot be changed except by mutual consent of the contracting parties. If differences arise between them and the rector they neither can remove him nor take action to that end. The congregation only can initiate measures having in view the dissolution of the pastoral relation, under provisions of the general canon, except in dioceses where other canonical legislation supersedes the necessity of the general law. In matters purely spiritual the functions of the laity are those of helpers to the clergy, and the official prominence attaching to members of the vestry, while entailing no specific functions of a spiritual sort, simply emphasizes their duty and their privilege to aid the rector as devoted, loyal Christian men, in carrying out his plans for the upbuilding of the parish and the care of souls. The ideal parish is, in this respect, that where the wardens and the vestrymen are chosen not for their social prominence or wealth, but for their Christian character, churchly intelligence, and godly zeal; who know and act upon the full significance of "the priesthood of the laity," and who are ready to cooperate under their rector's leadership in every good word and work. The spiritual leadership vests in the rector only, by canon law and by

church principles, since the ministry is of divine origin and authority, while the parish is a purely human institution, the creature of the civil law or of conventional arrangement. The parish officers cannot possess, then, a coordinate authority with the ordained ambassador of Christ, who is "over them in the Lord;" but on them rests the solemn obligation to forward in all practicable ways the spiritual interests of the church, as becomes men holding important trusts, always in loyal recognition of the headship of their rector. For the Church gives to him the sole responsibility of admitting to her privileges of membership in baptism, confirmation, and the holy communion; the unrestricted right to the church buildings for all lawful services and use; the exclusive direction of the worship and all that pertains thereto, including the character of the music to be rendered. And in his conscientious discharge of these responsibilities the members of the vestry should loyally sustain him by cordial sympathy, pecuniary provision, and personal cooperative service.

III. The functions of the laity as parish workers are as diverse and numerous as the organizing ability and zeal of the rector, coupled with readiness to work on the people's part, may afford scope for their exercise. There has been wonderful advance of late in recognition of lay help as essential to the conception of a well-worked parish. Not only is the field of Sunday school and Bible class instruction fully utilized, and missionary organizations for both old and young efficiently conducted, but large, well-ordered parishes abound with guilds, societies, associations of all kinds, which give abundant scope for lay activity.

Thus may be named church clubs for men and boys, the Knights of Temperance, Guild of the Iron Cross, the White Cross Guild, and the St. Andrew's Brotherhood, whose chapters are widespread throughout the land; the sewing or industrial schools, the kindergartens, flower missions, employment bureaus, and benevolent societies; the mothers' meetings, Girls' Friendly Society, and Daughters of the King. All these are doing untold good in parishes throughout the Church. Lay help is being utilized as it has never been before, and the rapid multiplication of parish houses is at once proof and promoter of this indispensable element in the practical aspect of true church life. The social feature, which had been somewhat neglected, has come into a greater prominence as all these means of doing good have through associated effort brought the people into closer sympathy and personal relations. The primitive order of deaconesses has moreover been revived, and many of these godly women, trained and set apart for special service, are now efficient helpers of the clergy in those larger parishes which have been able to secure them. The untold possibilities of lay cooperation have been begun to be availed of with much earnestness and good success, and by God's blessing, "putting it into the hearts of his faithful people to do unto him true and laudable service," will yield increasingly the best results to the glory of his name.

CHAPTER III.

THE LAITY IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

BY REV. HENRY H. STEBBINS, D.D.

THE Presbyterian Church in America dates from the seventeenth century. Authorities are divided between the earlier and the later parts of that century. The preponderating evidence, however, is in favor of the later date, say 1684.

Various separations have occurred in the Presbyterian Church—one in 1745, another in 1766, others in 1797, 1804, and 1807. In 1838 occurred the famous separation between the Old and New School Assemblies. In 1869 organic reunion between the Old and New School Assemblies was achieved.

In 1857 six synods at the South, connected with the New School Assembly, withdrew because of the approval of a paper on slavery. They were followed, and for the same reason, a year or two later, by two other synods in the Southern States. In 1861 ten synods, with the presbyteries and churches under their care, went out and formed a separate Church with another Assembly, known as "The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States."

In distinction from the Presbyterian Church at the South we write of the Presbyterian Church at the

North, and known as "The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America."

The Presbyterian Church of which we treat consists, according to the last report (May, 1892), of 30 synods, 217 presbyteries, 6,331 ministers, 7,208 churches, and 830,179 communicants.

The Presbyterian Church represents that form of government which holds that "the people have a right to a substantive part in the government of the Church by representatives generally called ruling elders; that the presbyters who minister in word and doctrine are the highest permanent officers of the Church, and all belong to the same order; and that the outward and visible Church is, or should be, one, in the sense that a smaller part is subject to a larger, and a larger to the whole, as in courts of appeal."

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America is governed in its temporal matters by trustees, in its local charities by deacons, and in its spiritual affairs by elders.

Trustees.—The trustees of a Presbyterian church are the persons named in its certificate of incorporation under the statute of the State. These and their successors in office are the legal representatives of the corporation. They are usually elected so that one third of their number go out of office every three years. Trustees are elected by the members of the church, men and women in full communion, together with all who contribute to the support of the church.

Deacons.—Our *Form of Government*, chap. vi, says: "The Scriptures clearly point out deacons as distinct officers in the Church, whose business it is to take care of the poor and to distribute among them the

collections which may be raised for their use. To them also may be properly committed the management of the temporal affairs of the Church." "In all cases" (we quote from our *Form of Government*) "persons selected as deacons must be male members in full communion in the church in which they are to exercise their office."

Deacons, like elders, are elected by their constituents. Strictly speaking, communicants only have the right to vote, upon the principle that only church members can consistently vote for those who are to bear spiritual rule. It is customary, however, in some churches, for those who give for the support of the Gospel, but who are not communicants, to vote for such officers, and that custom has been winked at.

Ordination and installation are necessary prerequisites to the exercise of the deacon's office, as of the function of elder. It is also necessary for the deacon, as for the elder, to assent to the standards of the Church. Deacons are permanent officers, unless by resignation or by deposition they relinquish their office. In many churches there are no deacons; in such cases the elders take the oversight of the poor.

There has been a persistent clamor for deaconesses, so much so that the last General Assembly, May, 1892, submitted to the churches the following overture: "Shall the *Form of Government* be so amended as to add a section reading as follows:

"The Session may elect and appoint godly and competent women, in full communion with the Church, for the care of the poor and sick, and especially of poor widows and orphans, and for all such

ministrations to bodily and spiritual needs as may properly come within their sphere.'”

Elders.—Our *Form of Government* recognizes two classes of elders: ruling and teaching. Teaching elders are, technically, ordained ministers. “Ruling elders are properly the representatives of the people, chosen by them (in the same manner as deacons) for the purpose of exercising government and discipline in conjunction with pastors or ministers.”

An elder, like a deacon, must be a male member in full communion with the church where he is elected. The number of elders is not limited. The office of elder is perpetual, but its functions need not always be exercised. Elders used to be elected for life or during good behavior. That practice still obtains, although it is being widely displaced by the rotation system, whereby an elder is chosen for a limited time.

The Session is the lowest of the four courts of the Presbyterian Church.

The Session consists of the pastor or pastors and (ruling) elders of a particular congregation. Two elders, if there be two, with the pastor, constitute a quorum. Otherwise one elder, with the pastor, may transact business. The pastor is the moderator or chairman of the Session. If there be no pastor, or if he be sick or absent, another minister of the same presbytery may preside, or, where that is impracticable, an elder may act in that capacity.

The Session, so constituted, maintains the spiritual government of the congregation. Its authority extends over all the members of the church, full communicants, those who have been suspended from church privileges, and all baptized persons. The

Sunday school is under the direct control of the Session. The Session has the authority to try members, to receive members into the Church, to administer discipline, to concert the best measures for promoting the spiritual interests of the congregation, and to appoint delegates to the higher judicatories of the church.

The court next above the Session is the Presbytery. It consists of all the ministers, not less than five, and one ruling elder from each congregation within a certain district. All the churches within the bounds of a Presbytery are under its care and government. Any three ministers and as many elders as may be present belonging to the Presbytery are a quorum. The Presbytery has power to receive and issue appeals from church sessions and references duly brought before them; to examine and license candidates for the ministry; to ordain, install, remove, and judge ministers; to examine and approve or censure the records of church sessions; to resolve questions of doctrine or discipline; to condemn wrong opinions; to visit churches for the sake of ascertaining their condition and of settling difficulties, and to unite or divide congregations as may be desired and deemed best.

The judicatory next in order is the Synod. It consists of the ministers and elders within a district including at least three presbyteries.

Synods are formed and their bounds appointed by the General Assembly. In 1881 a plan was adopted whereby each Synod should be made, unless obviously impracticable, conterminous with the boundaries of the State. The present basis of synodical representa-

tion is as follows: "The Synod of New York shall be composed of equal delegations of ministers and ruling elders from each presbytery in the following proportion: each presbytery the number of whose ministers and churches taken together is not more than fourteen shall send one minister and one elder; each presbytery containing more than fourteen and not more than twenty-eight ministers and churches taken together shall send two ministers and two elders; and so in like proportion for every additional number of fourteen ministers and churches taken together, or for the fraction thereof; *provided*, that no presbytery shall be entitled to send more than ten ministers and ten elders." Any seven ministers belonging to the Synod, with as many elders as may be present, are a quorum, provided not more than three of the said ministers belong to the same presbytery.

The functions of the Synod are: To receive and issue all appeals regularly brought up from the presbyteries; to decide all references made to them; to review the records of presbyteries and approve or censure them; to redress whatever has been done by presbyteries contrary to order; to take effectual care that presbyteries observe the constitution of the Church; to erect new presbyteries and unite or divide those which were before erected; generally to take such order with respect to the presbyteries, sessions, and people under their care as may be in conformity with the word of God and the established rules, and which tend to promote the edification of the Church, and to propose to the General Assembly for their adoption such measures as may be of common advantage to the whole Church.

The highest judicatory of the Presbyterian Church is the General Assembly. It comprises all the churches of the denomination represented by delegates chosen by the presbyteries to which they belong. The present basis of representation is: "An equal delegation of bishops and elders from each presbytery, in the following proportion, namely: each presbytery consisting of not more than twenty-four ministers shall send one minister and one elder; and each presbytery consisting of more than twenty-four ministers shall send one minister and one elder for each twenty-four ministers, or for each additional fractional number of ministers not less than twelve; and these delegates so appointed shall be styled Commissioners to the General Assembly." Any fourteen or more commissioners, one half of whom are ministers, constitute a quorum. It is the province of the General Assembly to receive and issue all appeals, complaints, and references that shall affect the doctrine or constitution of the Church, which may be regularly brought before them from the inferior judicatories; to review the records of every synod and approve or censure them; to give their advice and instruction in all cases submitted to them in conformity with the constitution of the Church; to constitute the bond of union, peace, correspondence, and mutual confidence among all the churches; to decide in all controversies respecting doctrine and discipline; to reprove, warn, or bear testimony against error in doctrine, or immorality in practice, in any church, presbytery, or synod; to erect new synods when it may be judged necessary; to superintend the concerns of the whole Church; to correspond with foreign Churches on such terms

as may be agreed upon by the Assembly and the corresponding body; to suppress schismatical contentions and disputations; and, in general, to recommend and attempt reformation of manners and the promotion of charity, truth, and holiness through all the churches under their care.

It is often claimed for the Presbyterian Church that its form of government is republican. There is, however, one important difference. In the Presbyterian Church there is no body that corresponds to the Senate of the United States. What our national government would be with only its House of Representatives, such is the Church in question with only its Assembly. It is a manifest and vital defect, a defect that sadly interferes with the judicial spirit so necessary to the conduct whether of ecclesiastical or national affairs.

So much for the leading features of the Presbyterian polity. Everything, however, depends upon how a Church is worked. A deal of bootless discussion has been indulged in as to the New Testament warrant for this or that Church. The claim has probably been made for every Christian Church that it was the Church of the apostles, the Church described and designed by the New Testament. It is with the Church, however, as with the Christian: "By their fruits ye shall know them." That is a true Church where the truth as it is in Jesus is held, preached, taught, and exemplified; where the outsider is made to feel at home; where a practically beneficent spirit obtains; where the beautifully related lines of edification and evangelization are pursued; where there is vital sympathy with every humane interest; where

God is honored with the substance of his people and with the first fruits of all their increase, to the end that the word of God may have free course and be glorified, that the poor, the sick, the suffering, the ignorant, and the sinful may be ministered unto, taught of God, and redeemed. The works and methods of the true New Testament Church are such as were embodied in the first Christian community, and which are repeated in the closing verses of the second and fourth chapters of the Acts.

The outcome of every Christian denomination has been such as to show that God's blessing has rested upon it. The measure of blessing for any Church is conditioned upon its fidelity to the necessary means and measures to the end in view. The conditions are, so to speak, generic; that is, they are available by any Church. Hence, what remains to be said in this article as to the active, aggressive work in a Presbyterian Church is equally applicable to Churches of other names and faiths.

To begin with the minister. Whatever else he is, he must be a pastor. The mere preacher is not the man for these times in perennial relation to a church. He may have large congregations, but without keeping in personal touch with his people, without teaching them from home to home, as well as publicly, without confidential and affectionate relations to them, he cannot fulfill his vocation.

The preacher's function is shared by newspaper and book. People are not so dependent upon the pulpit or upon the hearing of the ear as formerly. The pastor's province, however, remains undisturbed, undisputed, exclusive. Indeed, the demand has never

been so great as now for the pastor. The children of Christian parents, the members of our Sunday schools, the young men in our cities, homeless, strangers, alone; young women, away from their natural protectors and exposed to various temptations, were never so dependent as now upon pastoral care and oversight. Moreover, the place that ethics is more and more acknowledged to hold in religion makes a minister's sympathy and counsel more essential. God has placed some in the Church to be pastors. Never has that office been more sacred or imperative than now. We would not derogate from the enjoyment and influence of the best preaching ability; we must, however, subordinate it to the pastoral office. It is still a problem of how most efficiently to discharge that office. We would suggest the following as among the means that may be employed to advantage. Let the preaching be largely pastoral. In the matter of calling let there be reciprocity; let the parishioner call on the pastor, as well as the pastor on the parishioner. In this way fully twice the amount of pastoral work may be done. The pastor should be encouraged to employ correspondence as a means of keeping in touch with the individuals of his parish. The preacher knows what it is to cultivate and maintain a homiletic mood. So the pastor should cultivate and maintain a pastoral mood. In that way at the casual meeting, at the sociable, and at other times and places vast influence may be exerted.

We Presbyterians need to magnify our public worship far more than we do. We advertise that there will be preaching instead of giving notice of public worship. And our services need to be congregation-

alized. The people, including the children, should be encouraged to participate in the different parts of the service, especially in turning to the Scripture lessons and to the text. We have found that diversity rather than unity in our services contributes to the greater edification. For those to whom one hymn is not adapted another will be. Many who are not helped by the sermon will be touched by the Scripture lesson. "There are diversities of operations, but the same spirit." No Church need be afraid of organization. The more of it the better, provided it be vital and provided it be employed so that every individual, or as nearly so as possible, be brought into requisition.

A prevalent mistake is that of overlooking existing functionaries and of appointing others to do their appropriate work. Take, for example, the session of the Presbyterian Church. The eldership, rightly viewed, is no sinecure. It should be, as often it is not, a body thoroughly representative of the different tastes, preferences, and grades of the congregation. The younger as well as the older members should be represented. They should be capable both to rule and to teach. They should be sufficient in number to do the work expected of them. They should assist in pastoral work. To that end the parish may be divided into as many districts as there are elders, and each elder be responsible for a district.

The pastor's work may be further supplemented and facilitated by the women, of whom in almost every congregation there are a sufficient number willing and capable. A systematic round of visitation may be carried on, of immense assistance to the

pastor and to the temporal and spiritual advantage of all concerned.

Some sort of a brotherhood of young men is becoming more and more popular, and deservedly so. The number need not be large. They should be picked men—men who have in them the making of elders or other responsible officers, and who, while serving as a brotherhood, are under a sort of normal training for subsequent official usefulness. Their field, in general, may be among young men, and with the outsider, in distinction from the insider, with whom the elders more properly have to do. The pastor cannot keep in too close touch with such a band of devoted young men. They can save him many steps, do much clerical work for him, keep him informed of many things, and be an all-around resource to him.

There is one position, however, which our young men are often asked to fill, and very mistakenly; it is that of usher at the Sunday services. That position is a most delicate one, and one which our experience has taught us should be filled by the older, most experienced, best known, and most tactful men in the parish. The young men may assist, but should never serve as primaries.

In this day of grace no church organization is complete without a Christian Endeavor Society. Let the pastor be as closely as possible identified with it. It is a boundless field for his best effort. It is a bed of germs whose evolution he can direct and make exceeding fruitful.

Of course every church has its Sunday school, and thoroughly believes in it. As a department of church life, however, we believe it to be in its infancy. It

will suffice, in this connection, to enumerate some of the needed modifications, especially in our larger schools, to the end of the greatest efficiency :

1. A paid superintendent, trained for his vocation, and who shall give all or a requisite portion of his time to his high vocation.

2. A wide and proportionally large constituency, including the young people and the fathers and mothers in Israel.

3. A more rigid classification of the members of the school.

4. Class rooms.

5. A decidedly higher grade of teaching.

6. Hence larger classes and fewer teachers.

7. Hence, again, a few paid teachers, analogous to the quartet in relation to the church choir.

8. A normal class for the training of teachers.

9. A courageous revolution in Sunday school literature and libraries.

No well-equipped church is without a missionary society. But in many a church that pretends to be well equipped the missionary spirit is at a minimum, and the monthly missionary meeting goes by default. This is inexcusable. To avoid such reproach there should be several missionary organizations, such as the Woman's Society, the Young People's, and the juvenile societies, and these should be tributary to a vigorous and fruitful missionary spirit.

The Churches are fortunately multiplying where societies of King's Daughters and King's Cadets abound, and by which the interests of temperance, personal purity, missions, and various schemes of beneficence are promoted.

Very much has been said and written about the prayer meeting. We favor a published list of topics; the utmost informality; a general participation of men and women, by young and old; and invariable brevity on the part of the leader and of all who speak or pray. Never give up the prayer meeting, and never give up trying to improve it.

The social spirit of the church is fortunately in this latter day under vigorous culture. Organized sociability is designed to be the cement to hold together all parts and classes of the Church. It is simply indispensable to a well-ordered society.

The relation of the Church to the Young Men's Christian Association has been much discussed. Our experience has made us enthusiastic in its support as a means of developing the young manhood of the Church. The Church is fortunate whose young men have such a resource.

We cannot but commend the annual issue of a Church Manual. Let it contain lists of officers, the names of the various societies within the Church, the facts and figures of beneficence, of income and outlay, and especially an alphabetical list of members, a corresponding alphabetical list of streets where the members reside, a list of members of the congregation, a list of nonresident members, and a list of members whose whereabouts are unknown. Such a book need not be expensive, while at the same time it is invaluable as a means of information and as a basis of mutual acquaintance and sociability.

Such is the Presbyterian Church as to its distinctive polity, and such the spirit and methods that should

actuate it in common with the Churches of other denominations.

As Paul hath it, "Let all things be done decently and in order."

"The body is not one member, but many."

"And he gave some, [to be] apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. . . . From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

CHAPTER IV.

EFFICIENT BAPTIST CHURCHES.

BY PROFESSOR BENJAMIN O. TRUE.

THE first Baptist church in the United States was organized with twelve members, at Providence, R. I., in 1639. Soon after another local church was formed at Newport, R. I. A Baptist church was formed at Swansea, Mass., in 1663, and the First Baptist Church of Boston dates from 1665; but for more than a century the numerical increase of the Baptists was not rapid. Since the Revolutionary War the denomination has grown constantly and with unexampled rapidity. In Texas, forty-five years ago, there were 1,900 Baptists; now there are 233,000.

Mr. H. C. Vedder, in his *Short History of Baptists*, treats of American Baptists in three periods. The first period, until the Declaration of Independence, corresponding nearly with the colonial period of our secular history, was a time of foundation, persecution, and slow but persistent growth. During this period Baptist churches were founded in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and the Carolinas. In 1776 the entire membership of these Baptist churches probably numbered less than 10,000. From 1776 to 1845 was the period of expansion and missions. The increase during and following the Revolutionary War

was very rapid. In 1792 the membership of Baptist churches numbered 35,000, and in 1800 it had risen to 100,000. In 1850 the membership of Baptist churches of various names numbered 815,000. The modern period, from 1845 to the present time, is termed that of "Evangelization and Education." There are now, according to the *Year Book* for 1892, 35,890 regular Baptist churches, with 3,269,806 members, nearly three fourths of whom are in the Southern States. This estimate does not include over 600,000 "Disciples," nearly 100,000 Free Baptists, and other smaller bodies.

The rapid numerical increase of Baptists in this country and their general agreement in respect to important doctrinal views have been often remarked by thoughtful men in other denominations. How long this substantial unity of opinion will continue cannot be safely predicted. The facts of past history are notable. Thousands of regular Baptist churches, with millions of members scattered throughout the entire country, have remained in substantial accord concerning the essentials of Christian doctrine. These churches have been comparatively free from the irritating doctrinal dissensions which have characterized many other bodies. They have not been held together by complex organization, by a hierarchy, or by any external form of authority save the Scriptures. Baptists have the most democratic church polity of all the large Christian denominations. They fully recognize the authority and independence of every local church and the private rights and responsibilities of every member. The only way their liberty can be kept from dissension and license is by their recognition of

Christ's authority as King and submission to the law of Christ. Their substantial agreement in the past has rested on a few accepted principles. They have believed that God authoritatively and sufficiently revealed himself in Jesus Christ; that the Holy Spirit taught apostolic men and brought to their remembrance what Christ said unto them so that they were divinely inspired to transmit to future generations in the New Testament Scriptures a record of what Jesus Christ did and said. Baptists have also believed that the Holy Spirit may be safely trusted to enlighten the minds of honest seekers after moral and religious truth, and to prepare all such to interpret the Holy Scriptures so that sincere inquirers will be guided into that truth which is essential to their salvation and spiritual welfare. With these presuppositions—the revelation of God in Jesus and the agency of the Holy Spirit both in the production of the Scriptures and in the enlightenment of those who seek righteousness—Baptists have urged the privilege and the duty of soul liberty and the personal interpretation of the Scriptures. Baptist churches have regarded the prime requisite of church membership a profession of regeneration, of individual submission to Jesus Christ as Lord, and of faith in him as a personal Saviour. Local churches have been established on the principle of the spiritual fellowship of those and only those who profess to sustain this personal relation to Christ. All such are supposed to have a mutual interest in each other's spiritual welfare, so far as practicable to exercise a fraternal watch-care over one another, and to let their light shine into the darkness of the world without.

All modern creeds are subordinate to the authority of the New Testament Scriptures. All methods and machinery of organization are secondary to the intelligent conviction, healthful emotion, and Christian conduct which spring from vital faith in Jesus Christ and constitute spiritual power.

The early Baptist churches developed in accordance with these principles. They were extremely simple and democratic in their organization and methods of work. Yet this extreme democracy was a sort of monarchy, subject to the rightful and supreme authority of Christ as King. Those who composed a local church were members one of another. If one member suffered all suffered. If any member gave just cause of offense to the body without repentance and reformation he was faithfully admonished, and if he persisted in the offense he was excluded. Only those were admitted to baptism and church membership who made a credible profession of intelligent and scriptural faith in Jesus as a personal Saviour. This restricted the subjects of baptism and fellowship to professed believers. If any ceased to hold fast the profession of their faith or contradicted that profession by grossly inconsistent conduct they were cut off from the body. Questions of the admission and the discipline of church members were determined by the local church.

The regular officers were elders or ministers and deacons. There were such temporary officers, committees, representatives, or delegates as churches chose to appoint.

In some of the early Baptist churches there was a plurality of elders, and that is now possible (and

perhaps more desirable than is customary) where there are different local branches of one church with more than one place of worship, or where a large body needs the services of more than one man for preaching or pastoral work.

With the great growth of cities, and the increase of the number of large churches in which many busy men and women cannot know each other intimately, the simple conditions of rural churches and of small churches in cities have greatly changed.

The necessity of a pastor's assistant, or of work by efficient and devoted laymen in evangelization, discipline, care of the sick and poor, personal visitation, and religious conversation has been urgent in many churches; but though the varied and unceasing duties of many city pastors are well-nigh crushing, comparatively few instances of satisfactory relief by means of an assistant pastor have occurred.

The best of our city churches seek to relieve their pastors entirely (except in emergencies which should not be unwisely incurred, and may be made extremely rare) from all anxiety or responsibility for the financial affairs of the church, that is, for the care of the property and necessary local expenditures. This work is intrusted to a body of trustees in whose ability and integrity the church confides, and they act under the instruction and with the cooperation of the church and congregation. In most of the early Baptist churches the trustees were members of the church, but in imitation of other denominations and in accordance with some civil statutes many churches have committed the supervision of their property and local expenditures to a society composed, in some

cases, of “male members of full age who have worshiped with the congregation and have contributed to the support of preaching for one year or more.”

To this supervision of local expenditures by trustees one important exception is usually made. The fund for the relief of the poor members of the church should always be distributed by the deacons. They should be men of good repute, and so judicious that the church can confidently intrust to them contributions for needy members without any itemized report of the names of the recipients or the amounts bestowed. It is proper that all other financial reports be itemized and presented for approval and audit to a special committee, if not to the entire church or society, at least once a year.

Every true pastor will always be interested in the strictly benevolent contributions of his church, that is, in collections for other than home or local purposes. But the details of gathering and transmitting such collections should never be left to the pastor of any large and well-regulated church. A suitable benevolent committee should be appointed at every annual meeting of the church, with such instructions as circumstances and a spirit of Christian generosity may dictate.

For the further relief of the pastor it is desirable that there should be a distinct understanding concerning the relation of the church to the Sunday school. In this respect there has been great and unjustifiable confusion. The Sunday school should be *the church teaching*, with its officers, methods, and objects of benevolence at least approved, if not selected, by the church. If generous provision can be

made for the necessary expenses of the school, so that the collections may be devoted to real benevolence, children will be taught from early youth to give for others than themselves. The united and harmonious action of the church and Sunday school, together with the selection of proper officers, will permit of the helpful and effective cooperation of many men and women with the pastor in the best kind of Christian work and influence.

Where there are branch churches, Sunday schools, or missions a clear and proper definition of their relation to the central church, both in the way of support and allegiance, will relieve both pastor and people from numberless occasions of friction and anxiety.

A more fruitful source of possible disturbance is the "service of song." In many churches this has become so delicate and complex a question that in spite of the best endeavors of the pastor, trustees, and music committee, individuals (sometimes a part or the whole of the choir) seem to become "a law unto themselves." Every Christian Church should demand that its service of song be devout—the expression of worship, not of worldly pride. Elaborate and artistic music will be a source of weakness to any church, unless the service be the expression of genuine Christian praise. This impression cannot be permanently produced if the leaders are not spiritually minded Christians.

Deacons should be chosen for service, not chiefly to occupy a place of honor in the church. No man should be made a deacon who is not honorable and "of good repute" in the community. But what he

does in public and at the administration of the ordinances is but a small part of his work. Deacons should visit and relieve the worthy, needy poor. While they must be merciful and sympathetic they should be judicious, and not easily subject to imposition. By suitable division of work the deacons should have particular personal knowledge of all the humble and unfortunate members of the church. They should report all cases of distress to the pastor and some such cases to the church. There should be enough deacons to do this work wisely and well, and whenever a church is without a pastor deacons should be able and willing to minister to the spiritual, no less than to the material, necessities of the sick, the poor, and the afflicted. In some churches devout women, either voluntarily or employed by the church, share this work and also act as evangelists and visitors from house to house. Some have favored the formal appointment of deaconesses for these purposes, and much work which in this country properly devolves upon deacons can be done in the missionary churches of Asia only by women. It is essential that this work be properly done both at home and abroad. The official designation of the workers is less important. Deacons are sometimes elected for an indefinite period, but more frequently for a limited time. In many churches one or two deacons are elected (or often reelected) every year.

In watch-care and pastoral supervision the clerk can often render great service to the pastor and deacons. The clerk should keep in permanent form the minutes of all business meetings of the church and of all changes in membership, and be able to furnish

a complete list of the members and their residences. If needful he should have an assistant.

In a large church there should be a prudential or advisory committee, of which the deacons and clerk may properly be members. This committee should secure and consider preliminary information on the basis of which they can make recommendation to the church concerning the admission or discipline of members; but final action always rests with the church. Every member of the church, his place of residence, and something of his spiritual history and condition should be known to some member of this committee; and, either by local division of the community or on some other basis, the advisory committee should keep in acquaintance and touch with every resident member of the church. The clerk should correspond annually with all nonresident members. This advisory or prudential committee should have frequent meetings, and at any one of these meetings the pastor or any member of the church should be able to receive answer to any proper inquiries concerning other members of the church.

In serious cases of discipline the details of investigation should be carefully considered by this or some special committee, and recommendations presented to the church for decisive action. This committee may be appointed annually. In a word, the prudential or advisory committee in a large Baptist church may do much that is intrusted to the session or elders of a Presbyterian church, with the important difference that all power of final action in every case of the admission or discipline of members rests in Baptist churches with the entire membership. Much useful

work can be done and carefully considered recommendations can be made by a wise advisory committee when the desirable preliminary inquiries would be impracticable for the whole church. Such a standing committee exists in most large churches, and can render invaluable service to the church and aid to the pastor.

A standing committee should never arrogate to itself the exclusive right to do any specific work which the church for any reason may see fit to assign to special committees. Special committees are important, notably in the case of a vacant pastorate. The responsibility of taking preliminary steps toward securing a pastor usually devolves upon a pulpit committee, and the temporary supply of the pulpit should in such cases always be intrusted to the same committee which is to make recommendations to the church in reference to a regular pastor. This committee should comprise the wisest and most judicious, the best and most trustworthy members of the church. The committee should not be too large, and its members should remember that they are authorized only to make recommendations to the church unless they are specially intrusted with larger power.

The ideal Baptist church is a body of men and women, young, in middle and advanced life, all ready for some good word and work. Their chosen religious teacher will naturally be an important center of influence and "an ensample to the flock." His best time and thought should be reserved for the spiritual work of the church. He should be able to "meditate upon these things" and to give himself wholly to them. There should be many evangelists in the

church who follow the injunction, "As ye go, preach." There should be as many centers of spiritual activity and power as there are members of the church.

A Christian Church cannot be unorganized, but beyond a few particulars the details of organization may be very simple or at least very flexible. The most complete and elaborate organization without spirituality will be only mechanical, perhaps admirably adapted to a social club, but not fitted to impart moral and religious power to an assembly of those who profess to be the loyal and obedient disciples of Jesus Christ. Such mechanism, called Christian churches of various denominations, may have names to live while in reality dead.

The effort to increase the number of nominal Christian churches, or to swell the membership of existing churches upon such worldly lines of success, is contrary to the fundamental principles and practices of the early Baptist churches as shown in their history.

Activity may follow organization, but all desirable Christian organization and all healthful Christian activity are the products of spiritual life.

CHAPTER V.

DENOMINATIONAL STATISTICS OF THE UNITED STATES.

THROUGH the courtesy of H. K. Carroll, LL.D., special agent of the eleventh census, we are permitted to publish the statistics, but just completely tabulated, of the more important religious denominations of the United States, as shown by the census of 1890.

	Organiza- tions or congrega- tions.	Value of church edifices.	Members or commu- nicants.
Baptists :			
Regular—North	7,689	\$49,162,639	782,954
Regular—South	16,446	20,760,779	1,271,002
Regular—Colored	12,410	8,938,125	1,314,425
Six Principles	18	19,500	937
Seventh-Day	106	264,010	9,123
Free-Will	1,536	3,115,642	87,898
Original Free-Will	167	56,705	11,864
General	400	200,580	21,253
United	18	3,000	1,000
Separate	24	9,200	1,599
Primitive	2,550	1,232,342	87,571
Old Two Seed in the Spirit Predesti- narian	215	71,750	4,467
Total	41,629	\$83,834,277	3,594,093
Congregationalists	4,868	\$43,335,437	512,771
Disciples of Christ	7,246	\$12,206,038	641,051
Friends :			
{ Orthodox	794	\$2,795,784	80,655
{ Hicksite	201	1,661,850	21,992
{ Wilburite	52	67,000	4,329
{ Primitive	9	16,700	232
Total	1,056	\$4,541,334	107,208
Lutherans :			
General Synod	1,424	\$3,919,170	164,620
United Synod in the South	414	1,114,065	37,457
General Council	1,995	10,996,786	517,145
Synodical Conference	1,934	7,804,313	357,153
Joint Synod of Ohio	421	1,639,037	69,505

	Organiza- tions or congrega- tions.	Value of church edifices.	Members or commu- nicants.
Lutherans—(Continued):			
Buffalo Synod.....	27	\$84,410	4,242
Hauge's Synod.....	175	214,395	14,730
Norwegian Church in America.....	489	806,825	55,452
Michigan Synod.....	65	164,770	11,482
Danish Lutheran Church in America..	131	129,700	10,111
German Augsburg Synod.....	23	111,060	7,010
Danish Lutheran Church Association..	50	94,200	3,493
Icelandic Synod.....	13	7,200	1,991
Immanuel Synod.....	21	44,775	5,580
Suomai Synod.....	11	12,898	1,385
United Norwegian.....	1,122	1,544,455	119,972
Independent Congregations.....	231	1,249,745	41,955
German Evangelical Protestant Ch....	52	1,187,450	36,156
German Evangelical Synod.....	870	4,614,490	187,482
Total.....	9,468	\$40,739,994	1,646,871
Methodists:			
Methodist Episcopal.....	25,861	\$96,723,408	2,240,354
Union American Methodist Episcopal..	42	187,600	2,279
African Methodist Episcopal.....	2,481	6,468,280	452,755
African Union Methodist Protestant...	40	54,440	3,415
African Methodist Episcopal Zion.....	1,704	2,714,128	349,788
Zion Union Apostolic.....	32	15,000	2,346
Methodist Protestant.....	2,529	3,683,337	141,989
Wesleyan Methodist.....	565	393,250	16,492
Methodist Episcopal, South.....	15,017	18,775,362	1,209,976
Colored Methodist Episcopal.....	1,773	1,705,491	128,758
Primitive Methodist.....	84	291,993	4,764
Congregational Methodist.....	214	41,680	8,765
Congregational Methodist (Colored)...	9	525	319
New Congregation Methodist.....	24	3,750	1,059
Free Methodist.....	1,102	805,085	22,113
Independent Methodist.....	15	266,975	2,569
Evangelical Missionary.....	11	2,000	951
Evangelical Association.....	2,310	4,785,680	133,313
United Brethren in Christ.....	3,731	4,292,643	202,474
United Brethren in Christ (Old Con- stitution).....	705	645,340	22,684
Total.....	58,249	\$141,855,967	4,947,133
Moravians.....	94	\$681,250	11,781
Presbyterians:			
Presbyterian in United States of America	6,717	\$74,455,200	788,224
Cumberland Presbyterian.....	2,791	3,515,510	164,940
Cumberland Presbyterian (Colored)...	224	195,826	12,956
Welsh Calvinistic Methodist.....	187	625,875	12,722
United Presbyterian.....	866	5,408,084	94,402
Presbyterian Church in the United States (Southern).....	2,391	8,812,152	179,721
Associate Church of North America....	31	29,200	1,053
Associate Reformed Synod of the South	116	211,850	8,501
Reformed Presbyterian in the United States (Synod).....	115	1,071,400	10,574
Reformed Presbyterian in North Amer- ica (General Synod).....	33	460,000	4,602

	Organiza- tions or congrega- tions.	Value of church edifices.	Members or commu- nicants.
Presbyterians—(Continued):			
Reformed Presbyterian (Covenanted) ..	4	37
Reformed Presbyterian in United States and Canada.....	1	\$75,000	600
Reformed Church in America.....	572	10,340,159	92,970
Reformed Church in the United States.	1,510	7,975,583	204,018
Total.....	15,558	\$113,184,839	1,575,320
Episcopalians:			
Protestant Episcopal.....	5,019	\$81,155,317	532,054
Reformed Episcopal.....	83	1,615,101	8,455
Total.....	5 102	\$82,770,418	540,509
Unitarians	421	\$10,335,100	67,749
Universalists.....	956	8,060,333	49,224
Catholic (Roman)	10,215	118,040,746	6,228,579
Jewish Congregations (Orthodox).....	316	2,802,050	57,597
Jewish Congregations (Reformed).....	217	6,952,225	72,899
Latter-Day Saints (Mormons).....	425	825,506	144,352
Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ— Latter Day Saints.....	431	226,285	21,773
Grand total.....	156,251	\$670,371,799	20,218,910

THE END.

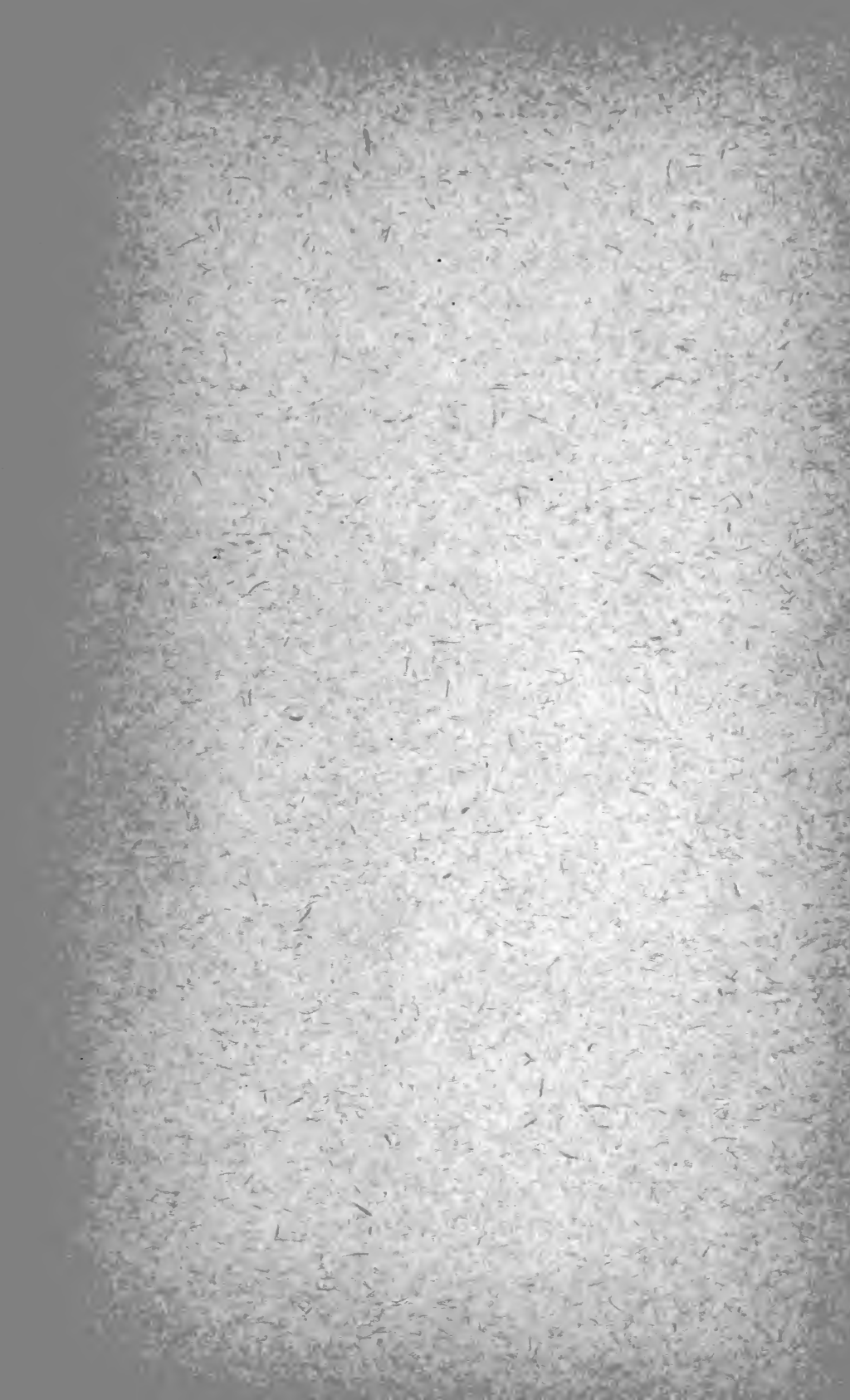
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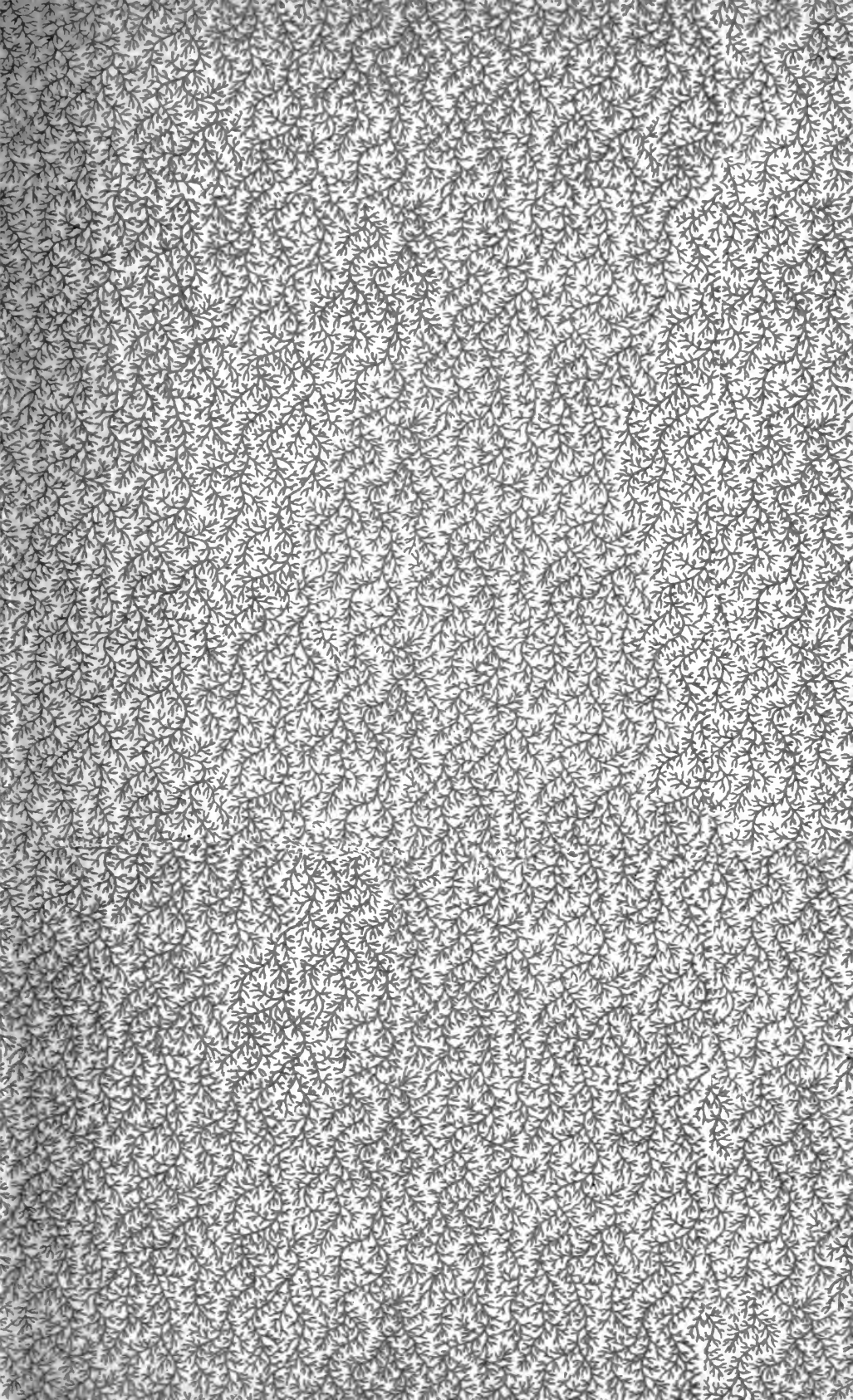


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